

# **Russia's Peacekeeping Policy: the Balkan Experience**

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## Preface

In the post-Cold War period, the Russians have been eager to participate in peacekeeping activities. Their participation has been one token of their emerging from behind the Soviet Union's Iron Curtain as it were and striving for greater integration in the world. Joining peacekeeping has not been easy for them. They have not been fully included at the political level in some cases, their forces were not experienced or trained in this kind of activity, and they have been short of funds. They did have experience in Georgia/Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Tadjikistan, but these experiences did not prepare them for multinational peacekeeping operations.

Their experience in the Balkans—that is, in the former Yugoslavia—has led to some real conflicts for the Russians. They have been eager to contribute and to be integrated in the multinational forces, but they have also agonized over their traditional affinity for the Serbs. They have been haunted by the shadow of NATO, first in the matter of air strikes in support of UNPROFOR (UN Protection Force), and second in the political direction and command arrangements for IFOR/SFOR (Intervention Force/Stabilization Force) in Bosnia.

The authors of this paper provide us with the Russian perspective on peacekeeping. They lay out in detail the dilemmas Russia has faced in the former Yugoslavia. One of them served on the ground in UNPROFOR, in Croatia, and thus has some unique insights. We believe this paper will be useful to those who are studying the best ways to carry out peacekeeping and even peace enforcement.

### About the authors:

**Dr. Valeriy A. Mazing** is the Head of the Department of Political and Military Studies of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies. He is an expert on security and arms control issues, and military policy. He is the author of many books and articles on those subjects, which have

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**Mikhail M. Yermolaev** is a retired Commander of the Russian Federation Navy. Beginning in 1985, he was directly involved in peacekeeping activities. He participated in several UN peacekeeping operations (UNTSO 1986–88, UNIKOM 1991–92, and UNPROFOR 1994–95). As a UN military observer he occupied several positions, including team leader, deputy senior military observer (Croatia, Knin), and deputy regional senior military observer (Bosnia, Sarajevo). After his retirement from the navy in 1997 he joined the Institute of USA and Canada Studies and is now a research fellow in the Department of Political and Military Studies there.

—H. H. Gaffney, CNA

## Foreword

In the years of global military confrontation, local wars and conflicts were not accepted by the opposing military sides and alliances as a real danger to their national and collective interests and international security as a whole. The situation has radically changed since the mid-1980s, when the so-called post-confrontation period of international development began.<sup>1</sup> The danger that the leading world powers would unleash a global war or a large-scale war between them has drastically diminished and is now close to zero. The number of interstate military conflicts in the world after the end of the Cold War shrank from 12 in 1988 to 8 in 1990.

However, in the 1990s, the number of internal conflicts has increased. In 1991 there were 13 conflicts in the world; in 1992, 17; and in 1993 to 1996, 18 annually. According to UN information, there were 22 spots of active military conflict by the end of 1997.<sup>2</sup> The primary cause of the growth of conflicts was the number of newly independent and politically ambitious states that appeared on the political map after 1989. The break-up of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of the Yugoslavian Federation, and the division of Czechoslovakia took place in that period. Twenty-two new independent states were established, none of which had been members of the United Nations before.

The process of disintegration of multi-national states and the emergence of new countries within their former territories has created

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1. Ed. comment: The beginning of this change can be dated to the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
  2. Center for Defense Information, *Defense Monitor* (Washington, DC), Vol. 27, No. 1, 1998.

new regions of intensive political instability—instability that may last for years to come.

Many of the conflicts of the 1990s have been more complex and diverse than earlier conflicts. They have often taken the form of bloody confrontations, both interstate and domestic. Even in Europe, with its post-World War II reputation as “an island of stability,” one can see the sharp intensification of ethnic, religious, and other antagonisms which have already carried away many tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of lives in the last several years—almost all of which have been lost in the former Yugoslavia.

The threat of such bloodshed on local and regional levels occurring has become less predictable and in many cases less manageable. It is evidently not by chance that Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former UN Secretary General, stressed in his report, *An Agenda for Peace*, that our world has entered “a time of global transition, marked by uniquely contradictory trends.”<sup>3</sup>

The situation is also aggravated by the fact that small and medium states now become sources of global and regional instability. In the past they played a mostly subordinate role in the rivalry of great powers or political blocs. Until not long ago, the USSR and the United States could exercise influence over their clients in this or that region in order to strengthen, or at least not forfeit, their global positions. Now the capabilities of Russia and the United States to exert influence over these countries have diminished.

Here is the way Swedish and Norwegian experts describe peacekeeping policy in their report *Intelligence in Peace Support Operations*:<sup>4</sup>

Earlier, when the superpowers equipped the conflict-  
ing parties, they also gained a decisive influence on the

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3. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping*. (New York: United Nations: 1992), p. 5.

4. Par Eriksson, Nils Marius Rekkedal, and Wegger Strommen. *Intelligence in Peace Support Operations: A Joint Report by the Swedish and Norwegian Defence Research Establishments*. (Stockholm: Division of Defence Establishment, 1996), p. 24.

conflict. The parties of today's conflicts rarely get any substantial support from the superpowers, but they are, for various reasons, well-equipped already. There is hence less opportunity for external control and the warring parties may thus act aggressively against peacekeeping units, if they are so inclined.

Anyhow, we have the impression that the "belt of instability," which was described by Zbigniew Brzezinski as early as the 1970s, has considerably broadened, mainly due to its advancement to the north. Some local conflicts could, under certain circumstances, escalate to the level of sub-regional and regional military conflicts. This has become the reality of our days. We cannot exclude the possibility that the number of so-called ethnic, religious, and territorial disputes and clashes will increase. Their territorial scale could be expanded and their level of military action intensified.

The task of preventing conflicts and, if that fails, stopping and solving them by peaceful means, is becoming one of the most important foreign and military policy tasks of Russia and other great powers in the world. We consider that working out and adopting a clear and realistic policy of international peacekeeping and peacemaking must be one of the priorities for Russia's political leadership.

The number of potential local conflicts and crises on Russia's perimeters is not diminishing, but is growing. Russia is now taking part in a number of peacekeeping operations on the territories of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including in the Trans-Dniester Region, South Ossetia, Georgia/Abkhazia, and Tadjikistan, as well as in the former Yugoslavia. Not all the attempts of Russian peacekeeping forces can be considered successful. They have failed to establish full-scale peace in some of the hot spots. Yet the participation of Russian "blue helmets" in peacekeeping missions within the CIS and in the Balkans has had some positive results. Russian peacekeepers have contributed to such missions as separating the opposing sides, preserving cease-fires, assisting local populations in getting humanitarian and medical aid, and defending groups of refugees returning to their homes.

The peacekeeping operation in the former Yugoslavia presents a new type of post-Cold War cooperation between different states, and first of all between Russia and the United States and between Russia and NATO. The Yugoslavian model of cooperation in solving modern types of conflicts can be applied by the international community to deal with crises in other parts of Europe and in other regions of the world. The experience and lessons, both positive and negative, of the international peacekeeping partnership in the Balkans deserve careful study and evaluation. A modest attempt to do this is made by the authors of this paper.

# **The basis of Russia's peacekeeping policy**

## **Russia's peacekeeping: evolution and characteristics**

Russia began directly participating in international peacekeeping operations in October 1973, when the United States and the Soviet Union reached an agreement on the bringing the Arab-Israeli war to a halt. To this end the two powers worked out a new package of confidence-building measures for the introduction of a lasting cease-fire agreement in the region. The package was later approved by the UN Security Council. The first group of 36 Soviet military observers arrived in Cairo, Egypt, and on 26 November 1973 joined the existing UN peacekeeping operation (PKO) in the Middle East. This UN mission, which was established by the UN Security Council resolution in 1948, was called the UN Truce Supervision Organization, or UNTSO.

From the early 1990s on, Russia has become more actively involved in such UN observer-type missions. For instance, in April 1991, after the Gulf War, a group of Russian military observers joined the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM). In September 1991, Russian military observers joined the UN operation in the Western Sahara. In 1992, Russian UN military observers fulfilled their international duties in the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia and in the UN mission in Cambodia. From 1996, they continued their presence in the former Yugoslavia—that is, in Bosnia—in association with the NATO-led peace support operations (IFOR followed by SFOR).

As of January 1998 approximately 70 Russian military observers were participating in a total of six UN peacekeeping operations around the world (in the Middle East, at the Iraq-Kuwait border, in the Western Sahara, in the former Yugoslavia, in Angola, and in Georgia).

To get a comprehensive, accurate view of Russia's peacekeeping activities in this new era, one should analyze the basic roots and conditions



of the evolution of these activities. We have identified at least three distinctive phases or stages in the evolution of Russia's peacekeeping doctrine, methods, and forms of conflict resolution.

### **The first phase: 1989–92**

The first of these phases, from 1989 to 1992, was characterized by Gorbachev's policy of *perestroika*. This policy marked the beginning of a process in which the highest Soviet politicians re-evaluated their Cold War views on the legitimacy and role of international peacekeeping and conflict settlement in hot spots around the world.

By the end of the 1980s, the USSR had not only officially accepted the legitimacy of UN PKOs, but had also started to repay its debt to the UN for the UN's expenditures on international peacekeeping. It did this despite the hard economic situation in the Soviet Union. The Soviet government perceived a useful role for the UN in managing political settlements in many of the conflicts in which the USSR, or its allies, were involved in the Third World. Hence, the USSR cooperated actively in the design of the UN forces for Namibia, Angola, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Cambodia.<sup>5</sup>

Another distinguishing feature of the Soviet Union's new peacekeeping policy was demonstrated in 1991, when in spite of its traditional partnership with Iraq, Russia permitted the passage of the UN Security Council resolution that enabled the American-led multinational coalition forces to liberate Kuwait. After the war, and after the Soviet Union had been succeeded by Russia, all five permanent members of the UN Security Council contributed military observers to participate in the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM). This happened in April 1991. This was a first for UN peacekeeping. It demonstrated a new spirit of strategic partnership between Russia and the United States and a new spirit of international peacekeeping. The UNIKOM goal was to separate the coalition forces and Iraqis on the border between Iraq and Kuwait and to keep peace in the region.

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5. S. Neil MacFarlane and Albrecht Schnable. "Russia's Approach to Peacekeeping," *International Journal* (Spring 1995), p. 307.

Russia's new foreign policy in the early 1990s led to an unprecedented event—a summit meeting of the UN Security Council member states. This marked a turning point in UN history and modern international peacekeeping. The decisions taken at this historic UN summit led to the elaboration and approval of an official UN strategy on peacekeeping. This was articulated in the fore-mentioned UN Secretary General's report, *Agenda for Peace*. The Russian government used this crucial document as a basis for formulating its own approach to conflict management, peacekeeping, and peacemaking.

However, with the beginning of Russia's reforms in 1992, the spread of chaos and instability in the "near abroad" of the former Soviet Union (FSU) after its dissolution, and bloody conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Cambodia, and elsewhere, strong and acute debates took place in Russia. These debates not only took place among experts from the political and military communities but also moved to the front pages of the mass media. It also became clear that Russia needed specially trained forces that would be able to participate in conflict management and international peacekeeping.

### **The second phase: 1992–95**

The second phase, from 1992 to 1995, was characterized by ups and downs in Russia's views on the character of peacekeeping. On one hand, Russia confirmed its adherence to classical peacekeeping and conflict resolution principles and methods. Moreover, these norms received a juridical basis. For example, the Kiev agreement on Collective Security Forces of March 1992 and the Tashkent Protocol on Collective Forces of July 1992 laid down rules for peacekeeping operations that generally corresponded to the requirements and values of internationally recognized procedures and mechanisms of conflict resolution.

On the other hand, some of the main principles of international peacekeeping operations, such as the consent of warring factions, impartiality, and the limited use of force, were not strictly observed in practice by Russia's peacekeepers in some of the operations that were organized and conducted under Russian-CIS command. Moreover, a substantial disparity between Russian and Western views on peace-

keeping in the FSU became apparent. The international debate on peacekeeping in the FSU has concentrated on the nature and legitimacy of Russian-dominated interventions.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning the character of Russia's peacekeeping policy during this phase, some Western experts claimed that Russia was violating the basic norms and values of international peacekeeping and using these norms and values to serve only its national, strategic interests. Michael Orr, Director of the Conflict Studies Research Center at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, argued that none of Russia's peacekeeping operations fulfilled the requirements of the agreements it had signed. Moreover, he thought that Russia was using the CIS to give a cloak of international respectability to its pursuit of what he said the Russian government perceived as its national interests around its borders.<sup>7</sup>

According to S. Neil MacFarlane, Russia's peacekeeping forces "have also served as part of an apparently coordinated strategy of pursuing influence through the limitation of the sovereignty of other CIS states."<sup>8</sup> Russia's peacekeeping policy in the former Yugoslavia was also assessed as a policy which displayed partisanship. It was claimed that Russia's active participation in international peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina has given Russia the opportunity to protect Serbs from encroachment by the international community, thereby strengthening Russia's credibility as an effective ally of the Serbs.<sup>9</sup>

Analysis of the nature of Russia's peacekeeping activities—particularly of the methods and techniques used by its armed units in the CIS "hot spots"—clearly indicate that Russia's practice in resolving conflicts was more equivalent to peace enforcement than to peacekeep-

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6. Maxim Shahenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping in the Near abroad," in Ingman Oldberg, ed., *Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy: West, South, or East: Proceedings of a Conference* (Stockholm: FOA, 1997), p. 46.

7. M. J. Orr. *The Russian Army and Peacekeeping*. (Sandhurst: Royal Military Academy, June 1994), p. 11.

8. MacFarlane and Schnable, p. 314.

9. Ibid., p. 317.

ing. Moreover, as A. Raevsky and I. Vorobiev noted, "Except for Russian participation in the UN force in Croatia and more recently in Bosnia, most Russian activities have been counter-insurgency operations rather than peacekeeping."<sup>10</sup>

To get a more objective picture of the substance of Russia's peacekeeping one should draw attention to the basic conditions and legal framework in which Russia's peacekeeping forces have fulfilled their duties.

First, the armed forces did not have any conceptual and doctrinal basis for national peacekeeping or peacemaking functions. Ironically, they obviously misunderstood the very essence of international peacekeeping and—more important—the difference between peacekeeping and crisis management. That was seen even in the terminology they used in reference to the Russian army's activities in the Balkans, Tadjikistan, Moldova, and other hot spots. That is, all international deployments of Russia's armed forces, even though they fulfilled different missions (for example, in Tadjikistan as border guards) were cited in the Russian mass media and on TV as "international peacekeeping."

In this regard one can argue that by its nature Russia's peacekeeping, or *mirivorchestvo*, should be assessed as a concept of "peace creation." This broader term includes in itself several distinguishable types and concepts of conflict settlement (e.g., preventive deployment, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and post-conflict peace building). In spite of the objective drawbacks of Russia's *mirotvorcheskaya politika*, one has to accept that this approach, especially in the light of lessons learned in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, etc., corresponds to the theories and views of some leading powers, including the United States.

However, it is obvious that Russia's peacekeeping policy has been shaped by internal and external conditions and has been aimed at meeting new realities and challenges. One can argue that Russia con-

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10. A. Raevsky and I. Vorobiev. *Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping Operations*. Research Paper No. 28 (New York and Geneva: UN, 1994), p. 5.

siders *mirotvorcheskie* forces as national peacekeeping contingents capable of acting in a wide range of crises and conflicts. Moreover, the military personnel for these operations should be volunteers for the operation, and should be professional, and well-trained and equipped for these purposes.

Second, Russia was forced to innovate and design its national peacekeeping strategy and forces from scratch. There were no military doctrine, manuals, textbooks, or training facilities for peacekeeping forces. Moreover, Russia's military, particularly on the highest command level, had no clear vision, no practice, and no understanding of the technique and methods to be used in international peacekeeping operations or in operations other than war (OOTW).

Third, the concepts of peace enforcement that emerged from (1) the UN Secretary General's report, *An Agenda for Peace*, (2) the authorization given by the UN Security Council to NATO to use air power and other enforcement actions in Bosnia, and (3) Russia's own experience in bringing to a halt conflicts in Moldova, Ossetia, and some other CIS "hot spots" with the use of military force, strengthened the positions inside Russia of those military and politicians who advocated the robust use of military force and considered this principle as a basic ingredient of peace support operations (*mirotvorcheskie operatsii*).

However, the drawbacks in the operations of Russia's peacekeepers in Moldova, Tadjikistan, Chechnya, and elsewhere demonstrated the limits and debits of military peacekeeping. While successfully bringing civil wars to a halt, such enforcement operations turned out to be unable either to address the deeper roots and causes of those conflicts or to achieve a self-sustainable peace environment.

Returning to the issue of the role of national interests in international peacekeeping, objective analysis would suggest that there was a clear link and interdependence between the use of Russia's forces in peace support operations in "hot spots"—whether in the Balkans or in the CIS—with Russia's traditional desire to maintain its geopolitical influence and role in these regions. We argue that the principal of impartiality, which is the basic requirement for any PKO, was not fully observed. Having said that, however, can we not ask: Is it really ever

possible for Russia or anyone in the world community to exercise full impartiality and objectivity in every conflict?

We are not going to draw parallels in this paper, but turning back to modern history and the lessons learned from American and NATO peacekeeping in the Balkans, one can briefly recall the findings of professor S. Neil MacFarlane. On the one hand, he found that the Western states and institutions, such as the European Union (EU), set themselves up as a mediators. Mediation requires a degree of impartiality. On the other hand, he argued that the EU, the United Nations, and NATO abandoned impartiality and replaced it with an obvious and active anti-Serb approach as 1992 passed into 1993 and then into 1994.<sup>11</sup>

In sum, it could be assumed that, during the turbulent and unpredictable years of Russia's democratic development in 1992-95, the evolution of Russian views on peacekeeping theory and practice was to a great extent a reflection of the political and military situation across the whole spectrum of issues of Russian national security and foreign policy. Ironically, we observe that the basis of Russia's peacekeeping strategy and tactics was formed under the direct and indirect influence of American doctrine and manuals for peace operations, as discussed below.

### **The third phase: 1996-present**

The third phase of the evolution of Russia's peacekeeping policy, from 1996 to the present, has been characterized by more constructive tendencies and achievement of some positive results. Starting at the end of 1995, the Russian government began reviewing the process of peacekeeping operations. They reassessed the lessons they had learned in the Balkans and the CIS. After brief consideration of the main phases of Russia's peacekeeping evolution, we would like to provide a short analysis of the present-day status of Russia's approach to peacekeeping.

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11. MacFarlane and Schnable, p. 301.

## **The legal and conceptual framework of Russia's peacekeeping policy**

To begin with, we would like to argue that, starting in 1996, Russia has been creating a comprehensive legal and conceptual framework for its national peacekeeping strategy and doctrine. It has also begun to build its own special peacekeeping forces. Today, Russia's peacekeeping is based on several national fundamental laws and documents.

First, the Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993 does not refer directly to the possibility of Russia's engaging in peacekeeping operations. However, the Constitution does direct that the President (as in any presidential republic) is in charge of all issues relating to leadership of foreign and defense policies, given that he is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. That's why Russian military contingents can be sent abroad for participation in peacekeeping operations only under a presidential decree. This is the case even if these operations are conducted under UN, OSCE, or CIS auspices.

Second, according to Article 5, paragraph 4 of the Federal Law "About Defense," which was approved by the Council of Federation on 15 May 1996, "The Federation Council must decide the issue of the possibility of the employment of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation." In other words, the President's power to send military for overseas duties, including for peace support operations, is balanced by the Federation Council's prerogative to make the final decision on this issue. The role of the State Duma on this issue is not so decisive, although in principle the Duma can use its budgetary rights to influence the decisions of the President.

Article 10, paragraph 2 of the Law "About Defense" provides that the basic legal functions of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation are "for repelling an aggression against the Russian Federation, for military defense of its territory, and also for fulfilling tasks in accordance with the international agreements of the Russian Federation." The current Law also authorizes that part of the Russian armed forces could be allocated to joint armed forces or could be put under joint

command in accordance with the international agreements to which the Russian Federation is a party (Article 5, paragraph 4).

Third, a Federal Law, "On the procedure of allocation of military and civilian personnel for participation in peacekeeping and peacemaking activity," was approved in 1995. This law specifically sets forth the norms and procedures for the allocation and participation of Russian military personnel in those peacekeeping operations that may be established under the decisions of the UN Security Council or regional organizations, or on the basis of bilateral or multilateral agreements to which the Russian Federation is a party. The distinguishing feature of the law is that it regulates only the procedures for those peacekeeping operations that are not considered as peace enforcement established in accordance with Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. The law for the first time clearly sets forth the functions of different state institutions and the decision-making procedure in Russia on issues of peacekeeping.

According to this law, Russia independently, yet considering its obligations according to the UN Charter, determines on a case-by-case basis whether it wants to participate in peacekeeping and peacemaking activities. In other words, Russia's obligations according to international law are considered only when the national legislative body (the Federation Council) is empowered to make the decision.

The fourth crucial document that determines the legal and conceptual framework of Russia's peacekeeping policy is Presidential Decree No. 1300, "The Concept of National Security of Russia," signed on 17 December 1997. The Concept sets forth the fundamental principles and approaches of the Russian Federation to international peacekeeping. Of the main provisions of the Law, we would like to outline the following:

- First, Russia considers that, by promoting the settlement of regional and local conflicts through peacekeeping activity, it is providing for its national security in the international sphere. In this regard Russia will seek the maximum use of collective efforts, including the UN, the CIS, and OSCE. However, the armed forces must be able to implement Russia's peacekeeping activity independently as well as within international coalitions.



- Second, the long-term interests of Russia's national security means that Russia's wider participation in peacekeeping operations is necessary. The implementation of such operations should become an important instrument for the prevention or liquidation of crises as they arise and develop.
- Third, for conflict prevention, Russia claims to prefer political, economic and other non-military means. Russia will consider the use of military power only on the basis of several principles. With reference to peacekeeping operations, it's worth noting two of them:
  - The use of force will be based on a mandate legitimate in international law and only when all non-military possibilities to settle the crisis have been exhausted or shown to be ineffective.
  - The use of military power against civilians or for the achievement of political goals is prohibited.

As may be inferred from the above principles, the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation pays much attention to Russia's participation in international peacekeeping.

On the basis of the experience that Russian military forces have gained in the former Yugoslavia, as well as in Moldova, Georgia, and Tadjikistan, and keeping in mind the international obligations of the Russian Federation, in 1996 President Yeltsin signed a decree entitled, "On the establishment of a special military contingent in the Armed Forces for participation in peacekeeping and peacemaking activity." According to this decree, there was established within the structure of the Russian armed forces a special contingent designated purely for peacekeeping operations. It would have a total strength of up to 22,000 military personnel and would include 17 motor-rifle and 4 airborne infantry battalions, plus support and service units.

One of the most difficult tasks that the Russian military faces today is finding the financing for complete implementation of this decree, given the difficult economic situation Russia finds itself in. Starting in 1992, the Ministry of Defense has been paying for international peacekeeping from resources allocated in the budget for internal

functions of the armed forces.<sup>12</sup> According to General Andrey F. Arinakhin, one of the leading peacekeeping commanders in Russia and an Assistant to the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, military peacekeeping needs big money. For example, he has reported that the expenditure for Russia's peacekeepers in 1997 was approximately 512.4 billion (old) rubles. However, a sum of this amount was not included in the state budget for 1998.

Despite the recent high-level decisions taken on national peacekeeping, there are still no military doctrines or manuals for the special contingents. They are needed to determine the substance of these operations as a matter of pure military tactics. They would also serve as the basic guidelines for training of peacekeepers. The only document that has allowed us to analyze what Russian peacekeepers are trained for is *The Russian-United States Guide for Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures of Peacekeeping Forces during the Conduct of Exercises*. This guide was developed in 1994 by American and Russian military specialists so the commanders, staffs, and units of the 27th Motorized Rifle Division (RF) and the 3rd Infantry Division (U.S.) could conduct a joint exercise. This guide still continues to be the basic guide for the training of Russian peacekeepers.

The guide clearly defines procedures for the organization and conduct of international peacekeeping operations (table 1). Moreover, the basic principles that the Americans and Russians agreed to adhere to in the above-mentioned guide have been incorporated into the recently published CIS Manual, *On Training and Conduct of Peacekeeping Operations in the CIS*, which was approved on 3 October 1997 by the Council of Ministers of Defense of the CIS.<sup>13</sup>

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12. *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 15, April 25, 1997.

13. *Nastavlenie po podgotovke i provedeniyu operazii po podderzhaniyu mira v sodruzhestve nezavisimyx gosudarstv* (*The manual on Training and Conduct of Peace Support Operations in the Commonwealth of independent States*) (Moscow, 1997), pp. 3-4.

Table 1.  
**The principles of peacekeeping  
agreed upon between U.S.-Russian military officers**

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a. **Firmness.** On matters of principle, peace-keepers' integrity must show a firmness of purpose and excellent solidarity or the force's prestige will suffer.

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b. **Impartiality.** Total impartiality is essential in order to retain the trust and confidence of the parties to the dispute and of the host government.

If and when a peacekeeping force is suspected of favoring one of the parties concerned, it will lose the trust of the other party.

Once mutual trust has evaporated, the peacekeeping forces will find it difficult to implement its mandate.

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c. **Clarity of intention.** The belligerents must be made fully aware of what the peacekeeping forces are trying to achieve, and why. Failure in this respect will lead to misunderstandings and distrust.

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d. **Anticipation.** Incidents that are likely to provoke violence should be anticipated and timely action taken to prevent them. A peacekeeping quick-reaction force should always be prepared to position itself between the two sides before an incident can escalate.

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e. **Recognition of host government's authority.** A peacekeeping force deployed in a country is invited by the government of that country. It can remain there only with the consent of that government. While a peacekeeping force enjoys certain immunities, its members must respect the host country's laws and customs.

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f. **Integration.** A peacekeeping force should be integrated in two ways:

(1) The national contingents should share force-wide responsibilities. This can be achieved by allocating responsibilities for logistic support, communications and airlift to different countries so that no one contingent is perceived to exercise undue influence.

(2) When a confrontation between the peacekeeping force and one or more belligerents is likely, it will be useful to interpose a small group drawn from as many national contingents as possible, or from a reserve force, to demonstrate solidarity.

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During the Russian-American joint military exercises in 1994–97, as well as during national exercises, peacekeepers of both countries were trained to carry out the following basic peacekeeping tasks: observing, patrolling, interposing between the belligerents to reduce tension, monitoring traffic (people and vehicles) in the buffer zone, guarding vulnerable and critical areas, showing presence in the crisis area, self-defense, liaison between opposing parties, facilitating negotiations, facilitating humanitarian assistance and economic activities, and mine clearing.

In the course of joint training, the military personnel of both countries worked out some joint understandings on the Rules of Engagement (ROE) for joint peacekeeping actions. These ROE determine that weapons could be used only in the following conditions:

- For self-defense, including against attempts to forcefully disarm the peacekeeping force (PF)
- For defending PF posts, positions, and vehicles
- For defending the PF units against attack
- For protecting controlled area/buffer zone facilities, the damage or destruction of which might cause catastrophes. These facilities include, for example, dams, power stations, and chemical plants.

## **The political foundation of peacekeeping policy**

After having considered the main legal and military framework of peacekeeping, and with the aim of broadening the understanding of national peacekeeping, we would like to analyze the political foundation of Russian policy.

In accordance with a decision by the Russian Government (No. 1176, of 19 November 1993), an “Interagency Commission for Coordination of Russia’s Participation in Peacekeeping Activity” was established. The main task of the Commission, as stated, is to provide a united governmental peacekeeping policy in the sphere of prevention and peaceful solution of international disputes and conflicts.

The Commission includes representatives from more than 20 ministries, agencies, and committees.

The Commission worked out the foundation of Russia's peacekeeping policy that was later included in official laws and presidential decrees. Among the foundations of Russia's peacekeeping policy, we would like to underline the criteria and conditions under which Russia will support and participate in international peacekeeping operations (table 2).

Table 2.

**The main conditions of Russia's support and participation in PKOs**

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1. Conformity of the proposed PKO with the advancement of Russia's national interests, fulfilling the goals of its foreign and defense policies.
  2. The existence of an international dispute that requires settlement through peaceful means or is a threat to international peace and security.
  3. The presence of a clear political aim and clear mandate for the PKO.
  4. The consent of the government (in cases of internal conflicts) and of appropriate parties for the establishment of a PKO, except in those cases that have an extreme character (e.g., violation of peace or an act of aggression) and/or exert a direct threat to the national security of Russia and its borders.
  5. Close ties of the establishment of a PKO with the assistance tasks that must also be carried out and with the political process of peaceful settlement of the dispute.
  6. The availability of resources adequate to the mandate of a PKO, and the readiness of appropriate states to allocate contingents and to provide the financing for those contingents.
  7. A relatively definite period for the PKO to carry out the operations of its mandate and conditions for termination of the operation. The "entrance" and "exit" from a PKO is no less important than its establishment in the first place.
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In his remarks to the seminar between American and Russian scholars at the Institute of USA and Canada Studies in December 1997, General Arinakhin listed the basic principles that Russia's military is adhering to when considering the possibility of its participation in multinational peacekeeping operations. Among those conditions and criteria, General Arinakhin underlined the following:

- The UN or a regional organization must have made the decision to conduct a PKO.
- The host government must have consented.
- The operation must be tied to the political objectives set forth by the UN or the regional organization.
- The level of participation should correspond to strategic national interests.
- The term of the operation must be clearly defined.
- The strategic planning of the operation must be multinational.

Our analysis of the political framework of Russia's peacekeeping policy indicates that, at least theoretically, it is now based on fundamental principles which in general correspond to the international principles and views on this issue expressed in the UN document *Agenda for Peace*. The same could be said about CIS peacekeeping, where Russia is playing a leading role. In this regard it's worth noting how Russia and the other states of the CIS understand the essence and aims of modern peacekeeping in the new geopolitical environment. According to the CIS Manual *On Training and Conduct of Peacekeeping Operations in the CIS* (1996):

A peace-keeping operation is a complex activity of coordinated and interlocking objectives, tasks, locations, and timing by specially trained military, police, and civilian personnel in the support of efforts to stabilize the situation in regions of potential or current conflicts, conducted in accordance with a mandate approved by the CIS Heads of State (or by the UN Security Council or the OSCE), aimed at stopping armed conflict and creating conditions facilitating its political settlement.<sup>14</sup>

Before articulating some perspectives on the development of Russia's peacekeeping policy, we would like to pinpoint some crucial factors that could greatly influence the future character of Russia's peacekeeping and the scale of its participation in such operations.

First, there has been a steady decrease of interest in the Russian press and TV on the issues of peacekeeping and conflict settlement, including those in the Balkans and other "hot spots." One can assume that the "Chechnya syndrome" and the inconclusive outcomes of Russia's military and political efforts in the settlement of conflicts on the territory of the CIS have created negative public attitudes toward peacekeeping and Russia's peacekeepers in particular. In this regard, it could be presumed that the lack of public support for further development of Russia's peacekeeping theory and forces, as well as the low interest in this issue that the politicians and military experts display, would limit Russia's military potential and desire to be actively involved in conflict management, whether on a national or international level.

Second, the beginning of military reform and general decrease of the total strength of the armed forces to 1,200,000 by the year 2001 has constrained Russia's plans to participate in peacekeeping. For instance, despite the 1996 presidential decrees (Nos. 27 and 45) that determined that two divisions would be kept ready for peacekeeping and peacemaking, the "Concept for the Building of Russia's Armed Forces for the Period Until 2005," approved by Presidential decree in the summer of 1998, envisages the establishment of only one peacekeeping division within the armed forces' structure.<sup>15</sup>

Some experts connect the plans to decrease the strength of Russia's peacekeeping force (PKF) with the big financial and economic problems Russia is suffering. It is true that financing for peacekeepers has been practically terminated. The armed forces themselves actually received only 26 percent of the funds assigned to them in the federal budget for 1998.<sup>16</sup> Another reason for Russia's reluctance, as

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14. *Nastavlenie po podgotovke*, etc. pp. 3-4.

15. *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 26 (100), July 23, 1998.

expressed by General Leonid Ivashov, Director of International Military Cooperation on the General Staff, is that, considering the new geopolitical realities and in accordance with its new defense strategy, Russia does not strive to project its military power into other states.<sup>17</sup>

The experience of Russian forces' participation in the military conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the CIS demonstrated the necessity for further upgrading of the professional qualifications, psychology, and morale of Russian peacekeepers, including those at the highest command level. In this regard one should note that, in spite of the presence of a "special peacekeeping force" within the Army structure, the main peacekeeping functions in international peacekeeping operations are carried out by the battalions of the airborne forces. Why has it turned out this way?

A number of reasons may be given. For one thing, the paratroopers have the highest level of combat readiness. Since 1988, airborne forces have had experience in 30 local conflicts. About 100,000 paratroopers have been through such mini-wars. Today Russian airborne troops are involved in three major "hot spots": in Eastern Slavonia (Croatia) under UN auspices, in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the NATO international force, and in Abkhazia as part of the CIS collective peace force. About 3,000 paratroopers and over 600 pieces of combat materiel have been engaged in these operations at any given time. However, these peacekeeping units were created on a temporary basis. The General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces plans to create several permanent peacekeeping brigades on the basis of the airborne troops. This will no doubt further improve the efficiency of these units in carrying out peacekeeping missions.

A special system of training paratroopers to carry out peacekeeping operations has been worked out in Russia. Actually, there are three special training centers—in Ryan, Ivanovo, and Pskov. A special center for training Russian peacekeeping units has been established by the Ministry of Defense in Totskoe, Volga Military District, on the

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16. *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, No. 26 (100), July 23, 1998.

17. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 2, 1998.



Russian-Kazakh border. The officers are trained (or re-trained) for two months, and the rank and file personnel are trained for one and a half months. The training program for peacekeeping forces includes training in establishing contacts between opposing sides in a conflict zone, transport monitoring, security and communications, check-point operations, and patrolling.<sup>18</sup>

The peacekeeping units are staffed exclusively by volunteers. They are armed only with light weapons, armored personnel carriers, and troop transport vehicles. This is because they are not supposed to have the capacity to wage war, but only to possess sufficient protection and firepower to guarantee their own security. By having this equipment, the peacekeeping units have a better chance of carrying out an operation in a hostile environment and of gaining the conflicting parties' respect and confidence in the units' will and abilities. The training of officers to act as observers in conflict zones is provided at Vystrel, the international training center outside of Moscow. There, Russian officers undergo their training together with officers from six other countries, including the United States. That is a clear indicator that a new peacekeeping partnership is being formed on the ground.

However, in spite of some obviously positive steps taken to improve the relations between the militaries of the United States and Russia as well as between Russia and NATO, there more minuses than pluses. In particular, there is still little tangible progress in implementing the provisions of the Founding Act "On Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security Between The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and The Russian Federation," which was signed in Paris on 27 May 1997. In particular, the concept of joint NATO-Russia peacekeeping operations has still not been developed and published. Such a concept was envisaged by the Founding Act, which stated that this concept should be built upon the "positive experience of working together in Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>19</sup> Does it mean that militaries of the USA and

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18. Lena Jonson and Clive Archer, eds., *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), p. 44.

19. Founding Act, "On Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation" (Brussels: NATO Information and Press Office, 1997), p. 11.

Russia are not ready to fulfill the summit's decision or is there no political will to do so yet on both sides? Do Russia and NATO consider that the experience in Bosnia is positive and could be considered as a real model for future military NATO-Russia joint peace support operations? We will try to partially answer these and other complex questions in the next section of this paper. Even though the concept is not yet available, we suggest that cooperation between Russia and the American/NATO military on peacekeeping issues has matured and has become much more predictable.

Concluding this section of the paper, and in the light of the above, we argue that Russia's peacekeeping is at a crossroads, waiting for the commander's will and directions. For its part, Russia has given clear indications of its intention to upgrade and strengthen its peacekeeping potential and resources. Russia's military officials and politicians have taken a great step forward by readjusting their peacekeeping strategy and tactics to the norms and values of international law and practice. Moreover, we argue that since the middle of the 1990s, Russia's peacekeeping activities have been put on a solidly legitimate basis, which in general corresponds to the international laws and norms of the UN and the OSCE.

## **Russia and conflict management in the Balkans (1992–98)**

From the very beginning of the Yugoslav crisis, two great powers, the United States and Russia, preferred to stay to the side. As a matter of fact, Yugoslavia and the Balkans in general had not been a traditional U.S. sphere of interest during the whole post-World War II period. Washington had paid attention to Yugoslavia only in connection with the East-West confrontation. Neither Washington nor Moscow had a real desire to be deeply involved in Balkan affairs.

One of the reasons for their not wanting to be involved in the post-Cold War Balkans situation was that both American and Russian politicians and diplomats were under the strong impression that henceforth, after the Cold War's end, the Europeans themselves would decide their own fate. In particular, the Balkans were to become the EU's sphere of influence. Perhaps Russians and Americans had been persuaded to keep hands off by the reasoning of their various geopolitical pundits. Nevertheless, the geopolitical schemes of armchair strategists soon faced an ugly reality. The Europeans' inability to take steps on their own to resolve the conflict in Bosnia eventually made American and Russian involvement in the crisis essential.

From February 1992 until November 1995, the world community conducted one of the most ambitious and multifunctional operations ever seen in order to restore peace and security to the territory of former Yugoslavia. For the first time in the modern history of the Balkans, multinational forces under the UN flag were used to create the conditions for the negotiation of an overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis.

The first force was named "the UN Protection Force" (UNPROFOR). Its operation was unique by nature, scale, and consequences, but it was a gross failure. Despite the fact that more than 200,000 soldiers

and officers rotated through the operation during the three years of UNPROFOR's activities in the former Yugoslavia, their presence and activities did not manage to bring sustainable peace to the region. By August 1995, approximately 46,220 military personnel were in the service for peace under the UN flag, but the operation was not working. Only after NATO enforcement operations in August–September 1995, the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Accord, and replacement of UN troops by the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) was the situation stabilized.

Originally, UNPROFOR was deployed only in certain areas in Croatia, designated as UN Protected Areas (UNPAs). These were areas in which the UN Security Council judged that special interim arrangements were required to ensure that the cease-fire was maintained. The UNPAs in Croatia were areas in which Serbs constituted the majority or substantial minority of the population and where inter-communal tensions had led to armed conflict. There were three UNPAs: Eastern Slavonia, Western Slavonia, and Krajina. For UN purposes, they were divided into four sectors: East, North, South, and West. The basic UNPROFOR mandate was to ensure that the UNPAs were demilitarized and that all persons residing in them were protected from fear of armed attack.<sup>20</sup>

Subsequently, UNPROFOR's mandate was extended to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Macedonia. It had also an operational mandate in two other republics of the former Yugoslavia—Serbia and Montenegro—and a liaison presence in Slovenia. In March 1995, UNPROFOR was replaced by three separate but interlinked peacekeeping missions in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia under the direction of the Secretary General's Special Representative and the Theater Force Commander.

While it eventually failed, UNPROFOR was a unique operation by its scale, consequences, and outcomes. Among main distinguishing features of UNPROFOR's operation in the Balkans in 1992–95 are the following:

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20. *United Nations Peacekeeping* (New York: UN DPI, 1993), p. 28.

- First, the UNPROFOR operation turned out to be the first case when, within the framework of one peacekeeping UN mandate, at least three types of peace operations were conducted. These included the peacekeeping operation in Croatia, a humanitarian operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (which later was transformed into a peace-enforcement operation), and a preventive deployment in Macedonia.<sup>21</sup>
- Second, for the first time in the history of modern peacekeeping and with the aim of ensuring implementation of the world community's will, the UN Security Council requested and authorized the regional military organization—NATO—to assist UN troops in Bosnia, including through the conduct of NATO land, sea, and air operations. In particular, NATO was authorized to ensure the implementation of the UN embargo regime, security of UN personnel in UN "safe areas," and the ban on air flights over Bosnia. This marked the first out-of-area combat operations for NATO troops.
- Third, the Balkans crisis marked the opening of a new page in the history of Russia's international peacekeeping efforts. Despite the fact that Russia, as mentioned above, had participated in UN peacekeeping military observer-type missions since 1973, in 1992 Russian troops for the first time joined multinational forces under UN command. Initially one Russian infantry battalion (Rusbat-1), numbering 900 soldiers, was sent to the Serb-Croatian border in the area of Vukovar, Osijek, and Vinkovci—that is, in UN sector "East." In January 1994, when this battalion was involved in arranging the disengagement of Serbs and Croats, it was reinforced with 1,500 additional soldiers and officers. In February 1994, in accordance with the decision of the UN Security Council, part of the Russian contin-

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21. On 31 March 1995, the UN Security Council replaced UNPROFOR in Macedonia with a new mission named "UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP)." Effective since 1 February 1996, following the termination of the UN operations in the Balkans and the start of IFOR mission, UNPREDEP became an independent international mission reporting directly to the UN HQ in New York. Its authorized strength is 1,050 troops, 35 military observers, and 26 civilian police officers.

gent of UN forces was relocated to Sarajevo. After further reinforcement, it was transformed into the second Russian battalion (Rusbat-2). Rusbat-1 numbered 500 soldiers and was put under the command of the UN HQ sector "Sarajevo."

- Fourth, for the first time a UN force was deployed for the purposes of preventive diplomacy, in Macedonia. The mandate of these peacekeepers has remained essentially the same since December 1992: to monitor and report any developments in the border areas that could undermine confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and threaten its territory.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the massive presence of UN peacekeeping forces in the Balkans, UNPROFOR's troops turned out to be helpless. They lacked a mandate to influence substantially the development of the armed conflicts in Croatia or Bosnia. That is, they could not intervene in a timely manner to stop or prevent genocide, atrocities, human rights violations, and inhuman military attacks by the warring factions against civilian populations, including in the areas of Vukovar and Krajina, Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Mostar, and Eastern Bosnia. UNPROFOR's mandate was only as a peacekeeping force. That restriction clearly influenced the character, capabilities, and activities of UN troops on the ground.

There are still strong debates going on in Russia, the United States, and Western Europe on the value and success of different aspects of UNPROFOR's activity. There is still no common understanding and agreement among them on the basic reasons of UNPROFOR's failure, or what may be even more important, on which lessons are to be drawn from the experience by the world community. Acute disputes are going on as to whether UN troops could have executed operations, and whether they even had the capabilities, to prevent the atrocities, evictions, and slaughters that took place in the Balkans within the framework of the existing mandate and with the equipment they had.

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22. *United Nations Peacekeeping*, p. 50.

Could UNPROFOR have prevented the atrocities that Bosnian Serbs committed in the summer of 1995 against Muslims from the enclave Srebrinica in Bosnia? It is commonly known that up to 7,000 Muslims were killed and up to 35,000 were evicted from their homes in the presence of the 400-odd soldiers of the Netherlands 13th Air Mobile Infantry Battalion.<sup>23</sup> Could the UN peacekeeping force in Croatia have defended or prevented the eviction of more than 200,000 minority Serbs who were residing in the UN-proclaimed "protected areas" in August 1995? Keeping these questions in mind, and before considering some of the lessons learned, we'd like to articulate the following findings.

- First, UNPROFOR was not mandated and had neither the forces nor the capabilities to stop fighting on the ground or to prevent massive violations of human rights. It could not give adequate protection to the civilian populations in the UNPAs (in Croatia) and the UN safe areas (in Bosnia).
- Second, the failure of UNPROFOR and the need for a fighting force to ensure compliance with the world community's decisions became especially clear during the spring and summer of 1995. This led to the decision of the leading world powers, including the United States and Russia, to replace the UN observers and peacekeepers by professional, combat-ready, rapid-reaction, multinational ground, naval, and air forces. These were mandated not only to ensure the strict implementation of the Dayton Agreement, but also to facilitate the creation of a sustainable peace environment in the Balkans.
- Third, the Dayton Peace Agreement could not have been achieved, or would have had absolutely different dimensions, if there had been no UNPROFOR. In this regard, we argue that despite its failure, UNPROFOR not only established pre-conditions and infrastructure for conflict resolution, but by its own

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23. For more details on UN troops activities in and around Srebrenica, see Charles Lane, "Dateline Zagreb: The Fall of Srebrenica," in Nader Mousavizadeh, ed., *The Black Book of Bosnia* (New York, 1996), pp. 116-124.

tragic example indicated the ways that would be necessary to restore peace in the Balkans.

- And finally, UNPROFOR's activities in the Balkans created many precedents for the theory and practice of peace operations. The Balkans crisis forced the world community to revise its fundamental views, not only on the character and nature of peacekeeping, but on the technologies and methods of conflict management to be applied in the new geopolitical environment.

Moreover, in a broader sense, far-reaching questions were raised: What is the state of the international security system since the end of the Cold War? What are the legacies of the Cold War that complicate the adjustments to a new international order? These are broad and difficult questions, but until they are confronted and there is some consensus on their implications, there will be no real basis for providing direction to the expanding role of the UN in the quest for international peace.<sup>24</sup>

## **Lessons learned from UNPROFOR's activities in Croatia (1992-95)**

Despite the fact that armed conflict in Croatia started in July 1991, the decision to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in this region was taken only in February 1992 (UN Security Council resolution 743). UNPROFOR was initially deployed in Croatia in May 1992, and the full deployment was completed in July 1992. The original mandate of UNPROFOR was to ensure that all three UNPAs were demilitarized and that all persons residing in them were protected from fear of armed attack.

In the course of 1992 UNPROFOR's mandate was enlarged to include monitoring functions in certain areas of Croatia ("pink zones"). These functions were meant to enable the Force to control the entry of civilians into the UNPAs, to perform immigration and customs

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24. Gene M. Lyons, "A New Collective Security," *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 1994), p. 176.



functions at the borders of the international fronts, to monitor the demilitarization of the Prevlaka Peninsula, and to ensure the control of the Peruca dam. In addition, UNPROFOR monitored the implementation of a cease-fire agreement signed by the Croatian Government and local Serbian authorities in March 1994.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the presence in Croatia of 14,000 military personnel, UNPROFOR failed to fulfill its basic mandate. In May through August 1995, the Croatian Army "reintegrated" by force three out of four UNPAs, with the exception of the UN Sector "East." This happened for various reasons of internal and external dimensions. The main reason was the clear absence of political will among the conflicting parties involved to solve their contradictions by peaceful means. Below, we consider in more detail some of the other reasons that predestined the UNPROFOR mission to failure.

**1. The premature international recognition of Croatian sovereignty, which put UNPROFOR's activity into a new context.**

In Croatia, the basis for the peacekeeping operation was known as the Vance-Owens Plan. This plan had been accepted by the federal and republican authorities in November 1991 and was later approved by the UN Security Council. According to the Vance-Owens Plan, the UN peacekeeping operation in Croatia was an interim arrangement and did not prejudice the outcomes of an overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis, including the status of Krajina Serbs in Croatia.

However, international recognition of Croatia as a separate, sovereign nation began with German and European Union recognition in December 1991 and January 1992. In spring 1992 the UN recognized Croatia. International recognition of Croatian sovereignty within republic borders without an overall political settlement of the conflict emboldened the Croats to attempt the "forceful reintegration" of Krajina (i.e., the area of Croatia inhabited through the centuries by mostly Croatian Serbs) into Croatia. This shift was acknowledged in subsequent UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>26</sup> Having originally

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25. *United Nations Peacekeeping*, p. 42.

26. Yasushi Akashi, "The limits of UN Diplomacy and the Future of Conflict Mediation," *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Winter 1995-96), p. 91.

been tailored to the specific features of an internal conflict, UNPROFOR found itself from the start obliged to cope with a qualitatively different situation that was a complex mix of internal and international conflict.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in a broader sense the act of recognition of Croatia, which had been a republic in a federal state that was a member of the UN, invoked a principle that the EU or the UN could change the external borders of a state without consensus from all of its entities and peoples concerned.

**2. The absence of clear strategy for conflict resolution and effective mechanisms of multilateral diplomacy.**

When UNPROFOR forces were finally deployed in Croatia in the spring and summer 1992 and started to fulfill the tasks assigned by the Vance–Owens Plan, they found themselves constrained by several factors.

- First, there was no clear understanding of UNPROFOR's role in the new political environment after the EU, and later the UN recognized the sovereignty of Croatia. Internal conflict became international, but there were no official changes in the basic UNPROFOR mandate. What was the main goal of UNPROFOR's presence in Croatia in the new environment?
- Second, the traditional tools of international diplomacy were not fully and adequately used. There were a lot of old and new international bodies that started to negotiate different aspects of the conflict. Among the main international institutions, we identify the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Zagreb-4 group of ambassadors. Paradoxically, UNPROFOR headquarters did not have anyone on the staff who had been associated with the negotiating process.<sup>28</sup>

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27. Victor-Y.Ghebali, *UNPROFOR in the Former Yugoslavia*, in Daniel Warner, ed., *New Dimensions of Peacekeeping* (The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 28.

28. Satish Nambiar, "United Nations Operations in Former Yugoslavia: Some Reflections," *UNIDIR Newsletter*, No. 24 (December 1993), p. 20.

- Third, in some cases the behavior of the international community itself threw many obstacles into the path of attempts to resolve the Yugoslav conflict. Among them one can pinpoint: (1) the composition or membership of the international bodies involved in diplomacy; (2) the language or discourse used in the diplomacy; and (3) the ways in which rules and principles were applied by the international organizations over the course of the conflict.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. The absence of clear strategy and means to provide implementation of the UN Security Council's concept of "UN Protected Areas."

Within the framework of the peacekeeping mandate in the former Yugoslavia, UNPROFOR was subsequently tasked by the UN Security Council to protect the populations in certain areas, i.e., the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia and the UN safe areas in Bosnia. Despite the clear similarity of goals that UNPROFOR was tasked to implement, in practice it found itself in a strange and complex situation, where the status and procedures set up for one concept could not have been applied to another. For example:

- UNPROFOR was authorized to request NATO close air support if there was an armed attack against "UN safe areas" in Bosnia, but it was not so authorized in the case of the UN Protected Areas in Croatia.
- The UN Security Council resolutions authorized the presence of armed local (Muslim) troops in "UN safe areas" in Bosnia, but the presence of such "defenders" in "UN Protected Areas" in Croatia was not authorized. Moreover, UNPROFOR was mandated to demobilize them.

The limitations imposed by the original peacekeeping-type mandate on the composition and tasks of UNPROFOR in Croatia, the internal contradictions of the UN Protected Areas concept, and the absence

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29. Edith S. Klein, *Obstacles to Conflict Resolution in the Territories of the Former Yugoslavia*, in David A. Charters, ed., *Peacekeeping and the Challenge of Civil Conflict Resolution* (St. John: University of New Brunswick, 1994), p. 156.

of clear mechanisms for the concept's implementation greatly restricted UNPROFOR's ability to fulfill the missions assigned to it.

**4. Contradictions between main international institutions on the issues of command and control over the peacekeeping operation.**

As UNPROFOR operations in Croatia proceeded, it soon became amply evident that the shared responsibility between the United Nations and the EU (with NATO coming into the picture later for Bosnia and Herzegovina), was unsatisfactory. There were contradictions and hot debates, not only on the legal issues of the essence and aims of peacekeeping and peacemaking, but on the ways and methods of conflict management at tactical and operational levels. In this regard, General Satish Nambiar, the first UNPROFOR Commander, argued that either regional organizations should handle such operations on their own or the operation must be completely under the United Nations.<sup>30</sup>

Keeping the above in mind, one had to accept the fact that UNPROFOR could do little to prevent the armed clashes between warring factions or the massive Croatian armed attacks against the UN Protected Areas in 1992–95. Moreover, UNPROFOR subsequently turned out to be only a passive observer of the Croatian Army's offensive in August 1995, even though the mass exodus of the Krajina Serb population from the Protected Area created a humanitarian crisis of significant proportions. As many as 200,000 people—more than 90 percent of the Serbian population of the area—fled the former Sectors North and South.<sup>31</sup>

**5. Inability of UN troops in Croatia to use force to fulfill their duties.**

The inability of UNPROFOR to undertake some decisive steps to deter or at least to minimize the consequences of military activities in Croatia raised a lot of questions about their Rules of Engagement and

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30. Nambiar, p. 20.

31. *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping*, third edition, (New York: UN, 1996), p. 552.

the use of force by the peacekeepers. On one hand, the UN peacekeeping force in Croatia was not designed to be a fighting force to stop or prevent armed clashes between warring factions. UNPROFOR was authorized to use force only to the minimum extent necessary and normally only in self-defense. On the other hand, it's worth noting that the term "self-defense," according to the UN, means "resistance to any attempts by forceful means to prevent the Force from discharging its duties under the mandate for UNPROFOR."<sup>32</sup> In any case, the question of UNPROFOR's ROE is a complex one that requires separate analysis with the aim of clarifying when and how UNPROFOR could have used force to discharge its duties in Croatia, if it could have used force at all.

After articulating the main reasons for UNPROFOR's failure in Croatia, we'd like to consider another lesson learned: how the security of UN peacekeepers themselves was provided for during the course of this peacekeeping operation. It's widely known that UNPROFOR's personnel had to fulfill their duties in hazardous combat conditions in which all the warring factions continued to use violence and military force as their main tools to achieve their interests, despite their official statements and agreements. That's why UN authorities and commanders at all levels considered this issue as paramount. With the aim of providing such security in Croatia, the UN Security Council approved the following measures:

- First, the UN Security Council authorized UNPROFOR "in carrying out its mandate in the Republic of Croatia, acting in self-defense, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, to ensure its security and its [own] freedom of movement."<sup>33</sup>
- Second, the UN Security Council decided "to continue to review urgently the extension of close air support to UNPRO-

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32. Bruce Berkowitz, "Rules of Engagement for UN Peacekeeping Forces in Bosnia," *Orbis* (Fall 1994), p. 635.

33. *The UN and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia: Resolutions of the Security Council and Statements by its President. September 25, 1991–April 28, 1995* (New York: UN, 1995), p. 81.

FOR in the territory of Republic of Croatia as recommended by the Secretary General in his report of 20 September 1993.”<sup>34</sup> In spite of these UN decisions, agreement between the UN and NATO was not reached in a timely way for various reasons, including political ones and disagreements on command and control issues. One year later, on 17 September 1994, the UN Secretary General could only inform the UN Security Council that “the UN continues to discuss the ‘technical aspects’ of this issue with NATO.”<sup>35</sup>

In spite of the fact that the UN and NATO eventually reached such an agreement in autumn 1994 for the employment of NATO air force to protect UN personnel in Croatia, not one such request from the UN to the NATO command was ever fulfilled.

- For example, on 19 March 1995, the UN South Sector Commander, General Gotil, requested close air support when the Croatian Army was conducting a planned and substantial artillery fire attack against him and UN Sector “South” HQ personnel (in the area of Budim). The request was not filled.
- Moreover, NATO air protection was not granted even in August 1995, when the Croatian Army conducted a massive offensive in UNPAs “North” and “South” (the Krajina region). According to the UN, a total of 98 UN observation posts were overrun and destroyed by the Croatian Army. Reports indicated that Croatian soldiers directly and indirectly fired upon observation posts, used peacekeepers as human shields, arrested and temporarily disarmed UN soldiers, and seized UN equipment. In all, three UN peacekeepers died as a result of actions by Croatian troops during the offensive and one died as a result of action by Krajina Serbs. In addition, 16 peacekeepers were injured.<sup>36</sup>

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34. Ibid.

35. *UN Security Council Reports of the Secretary General: S/1994/1067*, September 17, 1994, p. 4.

36. *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping*, Third Edition (New York: UN, 1996), p. 552.

In spite of the obvious dominant influence of country politicians on the military activities in the Balkans, some attention should be paid to another issue. One of the most important lessons learned is that the United States, Russia, and other leading countries, in spite of their different strategic and national interests, can work together and cooperate in the interest of peace and security. It is really important that politicians, diplomats, and military people representing the United States, Germany, Russia, and some other states managed to work out the joint peace plan for conflict settlement in Croatia. This plan came to be known as the "Z-4" plan. It was tabled with the warring factions at the beginning of 1995. Why was this plan not accepted by the opposing sides, and what could have happened if they had accepted the "Z-4" plan? In any case one can ask whether the leading powers, among them the United States and Russia, really did their best to prevent forceful reintegration of Krajina and eviction of Croatian Serbs from their homes.

Finally, summarizing the findings on UNPROFOR's activities in Croatia, some assessments could be formulated:

- Up to now, the UN has not been able to provide rapid reaction to crises and provide for the timely formation and deployment of multinational peacekeeping forces. It took more than six months after the Vance-Owens Plan was accepted for the UN to deploy the first peacekeeping battalions on the ground and take the UNPAs under control. Along with other factors, we argue that such a delay not only led to massive human tragedies on the ground, but influenced to a great extent the ways and outcomes of conflict resolution in Croatia.
- The mandate for any multinational peace operation, whether conducted under the UN or any other international organization's banner, should be clear enough to be able to provide national authorities and international bodies with clear understandings of (1) what types of peace operation they are going to participate in, (2) whether the mission will be for peacekeeping or peace enforcement, and (3) how the contingents should be equipped and trained.

- One of the main conditions for any peacekeeping operation is the minimum use of force by peacekeepers. This principle was laid out in the Vance–Owens Plan. But it put UNPROFOR in a controversial position in its attempts to provide demilitarization and protect the populations in UNPAs from the fear of armed attack exclusively by peaceful means. How should the UN and regional organizations, with whom a proper agreement is signed, react if UN personnel were being directly shelled or attacked, or taken as hostages? How is it possible to deter warring factions from the direct use of military power—for instance, using air or artillery suppressive fire on civilian populations before the very eyes of international peacekeeper? In this regard it seems quite urgent and necessary that further steps be taken to elaborate on the Rules of Engagement for protection of peacekeepers in all types of peace operations that are conducted under the auspices of the UN, OSCE, or any other international organizations.
- The concept of “UN Protected Areas” turned out to be ineffective in Croatia. Moreover, we think that the name chosen for UN peacekeeping operation in Croatia, that is, “UN Protection Forces” (UNPROFOR) did not correspond to the character of its actual peacekeeping mandate and led to much confusion. The local population in UNPAs considered UNPROFOR as protectors sent to the areas by the world community. It seems quite reasonable that such a name should not be given to purely peacekeeping forces in the future. We assume that the word “protection” could and should be used only in those cases in which the world community is actually able and determined to use all necessary means to provide such protection.

The Croatian model of conflict resolution is unique and deserves further in-depth analysis, but let's transfer our attention to UNPROFOR's activities in Bosnia. How effective were the UNPROFOR peacekeepers in Bosnia where three ethnic groups (Muslims, Serbs, and Croats) were fiercely fighting for their understanding of human rights, independence, and freedom? What were the main instruments and technologies used by the world community that finally brought this civil war to an end and opened the way to the Dayton



Agreement? We'll try to find some answers to these issues in the next part of our paper.

## **Lessons learned from UNPROFOR in Bosnia (1992-95)**

Although the mandate of UNPROFOR originally related only to Croatia (UN SC resolution 743, February 1992), the UN Security Council on 8 June 1992, by its resolution 758, for the first time extended the UN mission area to the adjacent republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and enlarged UNPROFOR's mandate. It did this only after the conflict between ethnic communities intensified in Sarajevo in May 1992, and after 5 June 1992, when UNPROFOR managed to negotiate an agreement on stopping the fighting around the Sarajevo airport and reopening it for humanitarian purposes.

UNPROFOR was now authorized to deploy UN military observers (UNMOs) and related personnel and equipment to Sarajevo to supervise the withdrawal of anti-aircraft weapons and to concentrate heavy weapons at agreed-upon locations in and around the city. Following intensive work by UNPROFOR to establish modalities of implementation of the 5 June agreement and the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb forces from Sarajevo airport, the Council, by its resolution 761 (1992), tasked UNPROFOR to ensure the security and functioning of the Sarajevo airport.

By 3 July 1992, despite continued fighting in the area, UNMOs and troops were deployed at the airport and other locations in Sarajevo. The airport was reopened for humanitarian assistance. UNPROFOR's authorized strength in Bosnia at that time was a reinforced infantry battalion of some 1,000 personnel, 60 military observers, additional military and civilian staff for the Sarajevo sector HQ, 40 civilian police to supervise the peaceful functioning of the airport, and a number of technical personnel, engineers, and airport staff.<sup>37</sup>

In September 1992, UNPROFOR's mandate was further enlarged to enable it to support efforts by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia and

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37. *The Blue Helmets*, p. 522.

Herzegovina, and to protect convoys of released civilian detainees if the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) so requested. In addition, the UNPROFOR was tasked to monitor the “no-fly zone”—that is, to monitor the banning of all military flights in the airspace of Bosnia and Herzegovina, except for the UN flights and humanitarian assistance (UN Security Council resolution 781, adopted on 9 October 1992). As of April 1993, UNPROFOR’s mandate was again enlarged and UN peacekeepers started to monitor the United Nations “safe areas” established by the UN Security Council around five Bosnian towns and the city of Sarajevo.<sup>38</sup> On 4 June 1993 the Security Council, by its resolution 836, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, further expanded the mandate of UNPROFOR to enable it to protect the “safe areas.”<sup>39</sup>

It’s a common perception that UNPROFOR’s activities in Bosnia, as well as its practical results, were mostly negative, that UNPROFOR demonstrated its inability to fulfill the tasks assigned, and that such poor effectiveness predetermined the necessity of replacing it with NATO-led multinational forces in 1996, after the Dayton Peace Accord was signed. It’s true that the management of conflict in Bosnia raised a lot of questions, which need to be further studied and answered.

In this paper we’d like to explore only some of the crucial problems that exerted a significant influence, not only on the failure of UNPROFOR, but on the character and directions of conflict resolution. Key issues we’ll consider are the following: the mandate and outcomes of international intervention for humanitarian purposes into Bosnia, the command-and-control procedures over UN and UNPROFOR’s activities in Bosnia, the implementation of a “UN safe areas” concept, and the use of force for implementing the UN Security Council resolutions.

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38. *United Nations Peacekeeping*, p. 43.

39. *The United Nations and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia*, p. 15.

## The mandate and outcomes of international intervention for humanitarian purposes in Bosnia

The UN peacekeeping force was deployed in Croatia only after a cease-fire agreement was signed and all parties concerned at the federal, republican, and local levels accepted the modalities of the UN presence. In contrast, the peacekeeping force in Bosnia-Herzegovina was sent when there was no peace to keep and no consent of all the warring factions. In other words, all the "basic" conditions for a UN peacekeeping mission were not met. Basic UN conditions include legitimacy, consent and cooperation, a clear and achievable mandate, continuous and active support of the UN Security Council, impartiality and objectivity, non-use of force, and unity.<sup>40</sup>

Before considering the essence and ways of the world community's intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one should keep in mind that the UN was initially against such a step. According to Susan L. Woodward, former senior adviser to Yasushi Akashi (the top UN official in the former Yugoslavia), "the organization most constrained by the norms of sovereignty and neutrality was chosen to deal most immediately with warring parties who were fighting to achieve separate recognition of their own sovereignty and its rights of non-interference within their claimed borders."<sup>41</sup>

The Bosnian model of conflict management raised strong debates among political and military communities worldwide on the issues of legitimacy, procedures, timing, conditions, and ways for third parties to conduct interventions into internal conflicts. Such debates on these issues are currently ongoing not only in Russia, the United States, and Great Britain, but also in the United Nations and other international organizations, including NATO. The problems these debates are addressing are more than just theoretical. In addition to interventions in Bosnia and Somalia, humanitarian missions have recently been conducted in northern Iraq (Operation Provide Com-

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40. *General Guidelines for Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: UN, 1995), pp. 15-24.

41. Susan L. Woodward, *The Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution: 1995), p. 318.

fort, involving 13,000 U.S. troops and 7,000 tons of supplies), Bangladesh (Operation Sea Angel, 8,000 troops, and 6,000 tons of aid), and elsewhere.<sup>42</sup>

Russia's official position on the issue of "humanitarian intervention" can be clearly seen from its attitude and voting in the UN Security Council for the last six years (Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.). For example, Russia was a co-author of UN Security Council resolution 770, which was adopted on 13 August 1992 and which established the legitimate base for the world community's intervention to Bosnia and Herzegovina. By resolution 770 the UN Security Council determined that the situation in Bosnia was a threat to international peace and security. Acting under Chapter VII, it authorized states "to take nationally or through regional agencies or arrangements all measures necessary to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and wherever needed in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>43</sup>

It's worth noting that Russia decisively supported not only the world community's attempts to provide humanitarian aid to Bosnia, but also the decision to use all necessary means for these purposes.<sup>44</sup> Overall, Russia clearly demonstrates that it shares the position of the majority of countries and organizations which advocate that humanitarian intervention is ethically justified and could be legitimate if (1) domestic turmoil threatens regional or international security, (2) massive violations of human rights occur, (3) the key role in command and control of such intervention is in the hands of the United Nations, and (4) all international and non-government organizations that provide deliveries of humanitarian aid, coordinate their activities with the UN, and act under the UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Michael J. Mazarr, "The Military Dilemmas of Humanitarian Intervention," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1993), p. 151.

43. Resolution 770 (1992), "On the United Nations and the Situation in Former Yugoslavia," *Resolutions of the Security Council and Statements by its President* (New York: UN, 1995) p. 26.

44. "Yugoslavskiy krisis a Rossiya" ("The Yugoslavian Crisis and Russia") in Elena U. Guskova, ed., *Documents, Facts and Comments* (Moscow: Slavyanskaya Letopis, 1993), p. 116.

The Bosnian model of conflict management raised very sensitive and principled questions, in particular, about how international humanitarian assistance and aid can be applied on the ground. Can humanitarian intervention by its nature be neutral and objective? What were the main outcomes of UN humanitarian aid to Bosnia?

Among the principal achievements of UNPROFOR in Bosnia, most experts note the delivery of humanitarian aid to "safe areas" and other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The scale and effectiveness of much of this work is not widely known. It is no mean achievement that from the start of humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo on 30 June 1992 until 17 October 1995 there were 12,625 sorties, delivering 156,557 tons, of which 141,285 were food and the rest non-food items (such as materials and medical supplies). The fact that siege warfare is among the cruelest forms of warfare enhances the significance of such figures.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, analysis of outcomes of UN humanitarian activities demonstrated they were not always properly conducted:

- Some experts claim that the distribution of aid was highly politicized. Each party demanded a greater share of such international humanitarian aid and was linking its cooperation in political negotiations with the satisfaction of such demands.
- The obstruction of humanitarian assistance to a party perceived as the enemy proved to be a powerful weapon in the war.<sup>47</sup>
- Some experts argue that "humanitarian interventions in Bosnia have in practice facilitated ethnic purges."<sup>48</sup> They draw attention to the fact that more than half of all humanitarian aid went to support the war effort by feeding and supplying soldiers.

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45. Ibid.

46. Adam Roberts, "From San Francisco to Sarajevo: The UN and the Use of Force," *Survival*, vol. 37, No. 4 (Winter 1995-96), p. 18.

47. Akashi, p. 85.

48. William Pfaff, "Invitation to War," *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993), p. 99.

- Control over the distribution of aid was a primary basis of local power. Because supply routes (roads, railroads, and rivers) were among the most important strategic objectives of military offensives, there was a necessary conflict between the warring parties and the UN organizations over the control of routes, that is, a conflict between the war and the humanitarian goals.<sup>49</sup>
- In this regard, some scholars claim that the UN and UNPROFOR were actually used in Bosnia as instruments for advancing the interests of the United States and other countries. In particular, Dr. V. Kremenjuk, Deputy Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada in Moscow, claimed that “under the auspices of the UN there was actually carried out a clear anti-Serbian action.”<sup>50</sup>
- Other analyses have showed that UNPROFOR’s presence was used by warring factions to promote their own interests. For example, according to General Charles G. Boyd, the former Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (from November 1992 to July 1995):

Muslims have consistently tried to use the UN and NATO (with the attendant safe areas, no-fly zones, exclusion zones, and demilitarized zones) as a shield, allowing themselves to weaken their forces in one area—depending on the United Nations or the international community to protect it—while concentrating their forces elsewhere. In the winter of 1993-1994, the Sarajevo government stripped the capital’s defenses to release troops to fight against the Croats in Central Bosnia, counting on their public diplomacy efforts to manage the risk to Sarajevo. It was a near-run thing, but in the end the city was protected by the threat of NATO air strikes and the imposition of the heavy-weapons exclusion zone.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Woodward, p. 319.

50. *Mejdunarodnaya zhizn (International Affairs)* No. 7 (Moscow: 1996), p. 78.

51. Charles G. Boyd, “Making Peace with Guilty Parties,” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 1995), p. 31.

To highlight some of the lessons learned from UN humanitarian activities in Bosnia in 1992–95, we'd like to draw attention to the main conclusions articulated by Sadako Ogato (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees):

- First, the provision of humanitarian assistance should not become linked to progress in political negotiations, or to other political objectives. The de-linking not only must be done, it must be *perceived* to be done.
- Second, the humanitarian mandate must be clearly understood by all. Humanitarian action is not just about providing relief. It is primarily about protecting people and ensuring the basic human rights and security of the victims on all sides of a conflict.
- Third, autonomy, impartiality, and neutrality are easier to maintain in peacekeeping operations where the political objectives of the deployment are clear and accepted by the parties. When political objectives are unclear and peacekeeping is launched in the midst of a conflict, as in Somalia or the former Yugoslavia, tensions can and do arise between the political, military, and humanitarian components.
- Finally, military resources and expertise are useful in accelerating and augmenting the emergency response capacity of humanitarian organizations. However, military resources for humanitarian purposes should be under civilian command and control.<sup>52</sup>

### **Command-and-control procedures over UN and UNPROFOR activities in Bosnia**

It's commonly known that the success of any peace operation is pre-determined by some fundamental factors, including unity of command and civilian control over the military. A majority of experts

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52. Sadako Ogata, "The Interface Between Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Action," in Daniel Warner (ed.), *New Dimensions of Peacekeeping* (The Netherlands, 1995), p. 126.

worldwide assess the strategic command over UNPROFOR, i.e., from the UN Security Council and the UN Secretariat level, as unsatisfactory. The UN involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina had, in many cases, been characterized by a sense of crisis management. This was apparent not only in the manner in which UNPROFOR had to lurch from one crisis to the next, but also in the way that the Security Council passed resolutions, expanding UNPROFOR's mandated obligations in response to each new crisis.<sup>53</sup>

Among other drawbacks of the UN command in Bosnia, one could pinpoint the absence of strategic vision and policy on how and by what means the conflict should be managed. In many cases, the role of the UN was significantly influenced by a media-driven agenda in reaction to public opinion. The complex underlying causes of the conflict have often been obscured.<sup>54</sup>

Another important issue for a peacekeeping operation is the effectiveness and impartiality of commanding staff and headquarters on tactical and operational levels. It's true that this problem always exists in UN peace operations, the composition of which includes military contingents who are from different countries and whose level of readiness and abilities to fulfill tasks assigned are highly variable. In Bosnia in 1992, the UN, keeping in mind the fierce fighting on the ground, decided to man the Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BH Command) with military staff personnel drawn exclusively from NATO member-countries.

Assessing the results of such a decision, General Satish Nambiar, former UNPROFOR Commander, argues that the decision to deploy and command the UN force from a force HQ in Sarajevo with personnel from NATO countries did not increase the effectiveness of the operation. Moreover, he claims that from the very beginning this experiment undermined the impartial character that a UN humanitarian operation was supposed to have. In this regard General Nambiar asserts that NATO personnel were often embarrassed by the

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53. Akashi, p. 92.

54. Ibid., p. 93.



demands placed on them by parent organizations, as well as their national governments or military headquarters.<sup>55</sup>

Multifunctional peacekeeping in Bosnia, and the character of UNPROFOR's mandate also raised a lot of debates over the issue of civil-military relations in UNPROFOR and civilian control over the military in particular. It's worth noting that, despite the Vance-Owens Plan's provision that the head of the peacekeeping mission must be a civilian, there was no civilian appointed until 2 December 1993, when Yasushi Akashi was appointed as the Head of UN mission in the former Yugoslavia and deployed his staff in Zagreb, Croatia.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the military-political situation was more complicated, the civilian Head of Mission was not actually posted till the end of the UNPROFOR's mission in 1995. Nonetheless, a lot of military, civilian, humanitarian, international, and non-government organizations were actively carrying out their specific tasks and mandates in Bosnia. They included, inter alia, UNHCR, ICRC, UN troops, UN civilian police, and UN military observers.

To what extent did this confusion over the command of the UN humanitarian mission in Bosnia influence the course and final results of the operations? We suggest that such a complicated issue deserves separate consideration. We do argue, however, that the coordination of all types of UN civil and military activities in Bosnia through exclusively military commanders influenced to some extent the character and direction of decision-making and methods of conflict resolution. It also significantly restrained the abilities of UNPROFOR to participate in or negotiate the peaceful settlements of contradictions between the warring factions on the operational and tactical levels.

### **Implementation of the "UN safe areas" concept**

UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 836 (1993) regarding the establishment of "safe areas" in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked a turning point in the UN's involvement in Bosnia. According to paragraph 5 of the resolution, the mandate of UNPROFOR was extended

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55. Nambiar, p. 21.

for the following reasons: (1) to deter attacks against the safe areas, (2) to monitor the cease-fire, (3) to promote the withdrawal of military or paramilitary units other than those of the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and (4) to occupy some key points on the ground.<sup>56</sup>

In accordance with paragraph 9 of this resolution, UNPROFOR was authorized to act in self-defense, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, to reply to: (1) bombardments against the safe areas by any of the parties, or (2) armed incursions into them, or (3) any deliberate obstruction in or around those areas that inhibits the freedom of movement of UNPROFOR or protected humanitarian convoys.

The UNSC also decided (paragraph 10) that:

Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, may take, under the authority of the Security Council and subject to close coordination with the Secretary-General and UNPROFOR, all necessary measures, through the use of air power, in and around the safe areas....

To this end, but later, the UN and NATO reached an agreement on the use of NATO air power to support the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on these issues.

With the aim of fully implementing resolution 836, UNPROFOR estimated it needed 32,000 additional troops to be deployed in Bosnia in order to credibly implement the safe area concept. However, the reaction of some UN Security Council members, notably Britain and France, was swift and negative, emphasizing instead their preference for a "light minimum" option which had been drawn up earlier by France and which envisaged the deployment of only some 5,000 troops. By the time the "safe areas" again came under sustained attack

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56. Resolution 836 (1993), in *The United Nations and the Situation in Former Yugoslavia. Resolutions of the Security Council and statements by its President* (New York: UN, 1995), p. 66.

by Bosnian Serb forces in 1995, even the "light minimum" option of 1993 was far from being met.<sup>57</sup>

What were the main consequences and results of the introduction of the "safe areas" concept in Bosnia?

- On one hand, there is no doubt that UNPROFOR's deployment in these areas, despite the fact that in most cases it was purely symbolic, gave a new dimension to the situation's development on the ground. This deployment made it possible to organize the delivery of humanitarian aid to different parts of Bosnia, and in some cases it even led to the decrease of armed clashes within the "safe areas."
- On the other hand, it turned out that the ability of one party to retain troops, weapons, and military installations within a "safe area" created an unstable situation and drew attacks from the opposing party.<sup>58</sup>
- Moreover, according to some assessments, these zones became the core of Sarajevo's offensive military system. The Bosnian Muslims periodically moved forces from one "safe area" to another in order to concentrate forces for offensives, using the UN and NATO, their troops and airpower, as protectors of the other "safe areas."<sup>59</sup>

In this regard it's worth noting also that in the spring of 1994, in the aftermath of Gorazde, Dutch Brig.-Gen. G.J.M. Bastiaans (the Head of the UN Military observers in the former Yugoslavia) claimed that, "the Muslims provoked the Serbs with shooting and harassment to such a point that they had little option other than using their heavy weapons."<sup>60</sup> Thus, according to Susan L. Woodward, an additional

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57. Leif Ahlquist, ed., *Co-operation, Command and Control in UN Peacekeeping Operations* (Stockholm: Swedish War College, 1996), p. 110.

58. *The Blue Helmets*, p. 536.

59. Yossef Bodansky. *Offensive in the Balkans* (Alexandria, Virginia, USA: 1995), p. 62.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

tactic of warfare was encouraged. The aim was to provoke Serbian artillery fire in order to provoke the use of air power against the Serbs. The Muslims would then use the consequent media attention to point out that the UN and NATO could not protect the safe areas. This would reinforce their propaganda strategy that they were the victims of Serb aggression and deserving of military assistance. They concentrated this strategy on Sarajevo, to the exclusion of other cities and towns similarly at risk from shelling by all sides, such as Mostar.<sup>61</sup>

Due to the above and other factors the Secretary-General in the end of 1994 had to officially recognize that the concept of "safe areas" was not working. To rectify this situation, he recommended that the UNSC modify the safe-areas concept, i.e.: (1) to redefine the regimes, and (2) to mandate that UNPROFOR define the operational boundaries of the safe areas with or without the agreement of the parties.<sup>62</sup> However, the beginning of the strategic offensive by Bosnian Muslims against Bosnian Serbs in the spring of 1995 precluded the UN or UNPROFOR from implementing these decisions.

In sum, despite some positive outcomes attendant upon the introduction of "safe areas" in Bosnia, UNPROFOR turned out to be unable to implement the concept. As Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith (Commander of UN forces in Bosnia in 1995) noted: "The actual success of achieving peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the hands of others. We can do things, but the initiative, the control, lies with those who are fighting."<sup>63</sup>

## **The use of force for implementing UN Security Council resolutions**

To many observers, the extensive bombing campaign initiated by NATO in late August and early September 1995 was seen as supporting the argument that a more forceful option was always available to

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61. Woodward, p. 320-321.

62. *The Blue Helmets*, p. 537.

63. Rupert Smith, "The Path of Cautious Optimism," *United Nations News*, Issue No. 17 (April 1995), p. 4.

UNPROFOR, and that it was only the belated air campaign which finally produced the results that allowed a peace agreement to be reached. There can be little doubt that the weakening of the military position of the Serbs permitted progress to be made at the negotiating table.<sup>64</sup> If the argument is that a dramatic and massive use of NATO power during the first stage of conflict management could have brought peace to Bosnia much earlier, then there are other arguments against the premature use of force. We'll try to consider such arguments by addressing the following questions: Were there any alternatives to the patterns taken by the world community to manage the conflict in Bosnia through deployment of UNPROFOR? Could UNPROFOR by itself, without NATO, have used coercive force and conducted "robust" operations?

First of all, we argue that the UNSC decision to send peacekeeping forces to Bosnia with exclusively humanitarian purposes in the midst of a war clearly indicated that the world community could not or was not willing in 1991-92 to use means other than UNPROFOR. Concerning the use of force by UNPROFOR, one can pinpoint the conditions in which UNPROFOR was operating in Bosnia. On one hand, the UNSC required the UN peacekeepers to get the consent of the parties and to stay impartial. We would note that peacekeeping in its essence remains a "secondary" instrument in conflict management. It requires prior consent at the strategic and operational levels, and aims to sustain and promote the level of consent that may exist at the tactical level by seeking to act in a manifestly impartial manner.<sup>65</sup>

UNPROFOR could not depart from impartiality and consent, or at least it had to pretend not to depart, in the course of its operations. But, at the same time, by authorizing UNPROFOR to fulfill some peace-enforcement tasks, particularly to protect "safe areas," the UNSC put UNPROFOR in a strange and complicated position. How could it remain impartial when it was using force against one side in the conflict with whom it was at the same time trying to negotiate

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64. *Co-operation, Command, and Control in UN Peace-keeping Operations*, p. 111.

65. Mats Berdal, "Military Aspects of UN Peacekeeping" in D. Warner (ed.), *New Dimensions of Peacekeeping* (The Netherlands, 1995), p. 133.

peace? In general, the UNSC's decision to create safe areas marked the beginning of the introduction of enforcement measures into an otherwise humanitarian operation. In its essence, it was making a transition from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. But, it's worth noting that, despite such re-tasking, the decision was not supported by steps to provide UNPROFOR with adequate resources and all-round support.

After it became clear that UNPROFOR was unable to protect "safe areas," the decision was taken to use NATO air power for these purposes. By that time, NATO had already been conducting some enforcing operations aimed at implementing some crucial UNSC resolutions. One of these operations was "Sharp Guard," which began on 16 July 1992 to monitor the compliance with two UN resolutions: the maintenance of the arms embargo and the application of economic sanctions. A second was "Operation Deny Flight," which began on 12 April 1993 to ensure compliance with the ban on flights in Bosnia airspace. However, despite its apparent simplicity, many problems arose with the "no-fly zone." It proved extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prevent night flights by helicopters. Also, the UK and France were reportedly reluctant to back up the operation because of their concerns of reprisals against their forces on the ground.<sup>66</sup>

The rapid erosion in 1994–95 of the idea of a joint role for UNPROFOR and NATO as cease-fire enforcers and defenders of safe areas has been attributed to many causes:

- The reluctance of UNPROFOR commanders and UN officials, especially the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi, to authorize the use of air-power
- The large number of people on both the UN and NATO sides who had to agree before any action could be taken
- The inherent limits of air power to affect the situation on the ground

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66. Roberts, p. 20.

- The Bosnian Serbs' hostage-taking of UNPROFOR personnel and their bombardments of safe areas on the occasions when NATO air-power was used
- UNPROFOR's need for Serb cooperation if its humanitarian flights and convoys were to reach besieged areas
- The strong opposition of some powers, especially Russia, to the extensive use of NATO forces in the former Yugoslavia
- The more subtle opposition of other powers, including many NATO members (not least of which was the UK), to action which might entangle them further in Yugoslavia, or endanger their troops serving with UNPROFOR.<sup>67</sup>

NATO used air power for the first time on 28 February 1994, when U.S. F-16s under NATO command shot down four Bosnian Serb Galeb ground attack aircraft shortly after they had attacked towns held by mainly Bosnian government forces. At the request of the UN, NATO used air power several times in response either to Serb attacks or to their refusal to comply with the "safe area" or exclusion zone restrictions. How effective were NATO operations and what were the actual outcomes? How did NATO's participation influence the ways and means of managing conflict in Bosnia? We think that the analysis of such issues deserves special attention and separate discussion. Therefore, in this paper we'd like to draw attention only to the following:

- **Lesson 1.** Russia and the U.S./NATO's military demonstrated in Bosnia that they can conduct joint peace operations on a highly professional level. Moreover, Russia and the United States/NATO demonstrated that they can combine their potentials in conflict management, even when they have different geopolitical interests.
- **Lesson 2.** The experience of co-operation between Russia and the United States/NATO in the former Yugoslavia demonstrated that these countries consider the use of force as the last resort in managing conflicts of low intensity. However, there

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67. Roberts, p. 21.

were some disagreements between Russia and the United States/NATO on such issues as the appropriate time for the use of military force, or the point at which the use of force became inevitable—i.e., When was it time for “the last resort?” We believe that such issues as the correlation between military and non-military means, and at what stage, when, and to what extent military power could or must be used in the course of conflict management, will remain sensitive and debatable issues.

- **Lesson 3.** One of the main lessons learned is that the United States, other NATO countries, and Russia consider the issue of security of their personnel as paramount. They have a common position on this issue. Russia felt this issue acutely because of earlier big losses among Russia’s peacekeepers in the CIS “hot spots.” In this regard we suggest that the United States and Russia could take further steps to adopt new international mechanisms and norms to minimize the risks to the security of personnel engaged in peace operations conducted under auspices of the UN, the OSCE, or any other international organization.
- **Lesson 4.** The use of force in the UN humanitarian operation in Bosnia raised many doubts about combining peacekeeping and peace enforcement. In particular, in the course of conflict management in the Balkans, Russia repeatedly expressed its concerns over the methods and manner of the use of force by NATO. In this regard it’s worth noting the proposals by Russia’s military. According to General V. Potemkin, the Head of the Center for Military and Strategic Studies of the General HQ of the Russian Armed Forces:

The experience of using multinational forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, peacekeeping in the territory of the CIS countries, and in other regions of the world has proved the necessity to clarify, develop and find agreement on the issue of a legislative base for the use of force by multinational forces in peace support and mainly in peace-enforcement operations, which are conducted in the areas of interests both of Russia and the United States, as well as other states.<sup>68</sup>



After considering some lessons learned from the American/NATO and Russian peacekeeping in managing conflict in Bosnia in 1992–95, we'd like to state the main findings of this paper with reference to UN activities in Bosnia:

1. Despite the fact that civil war in Croatia spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was recognized as a sovereign state, the UN Security Council did not establish and deploy a distinct peacekeeping operation there that accorded with basic norms and requirements. Instead it chose a policy of serial and ad hoc adaptation of the UNPROFOR's mandate to the situation on the ground as crises occurred.
2. The intervention of the world community in Bosnia and Herzegovina for humanitarian purposes, which was primarily carried out through UNPROFOR, UNHCR, and ICRCs as well as by other NGOs, saved innumerable lives and provided shelter and aid to different entities throughout Bosnia. At the same time, the question remains whether the conflict could have been solved if political, historical, and other roots of this conflict had been addressed more directly. Moreover, the methods and tactics of warfighting that were used by all warring factions in Bosnia were to a great extent influenced by the very presence and functioning of the UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.
3. The failure of UNPROFOR's mission in Bosnia was to a great extent predetermined by the disagreements between the key international players, including the UN, NATO, the UNHCR, the United States, Russia, and others, not only on the issues of character and nature of the conflict—that is, whether it was a civil war or Serbian aggression against Muslims—but on the methods and means of management of the conflict.
4. The creation of "safe areas" in Bosnia, motivated largely by the humanitarian objective, became a turning point in the manage-

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68. Vladimir Potemkin, "Lessons Learned from Interaction Between Russia and US/NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina," In *Materials of Conference US/NATO and Russian Military Co-operation* (Moscow: ISKRAN, 1997), p. 52.

ment of Bosnian conflict. It made an escalation of the war possible and exposed civilians to bombardment.<sup>69</sup> The creation of "safe areas" as havens for six Muslim-majority towns, as well as their protection not only by UNPROFOR on the ground, but through NATO air strikes conducted exclusively against one side in the conflict—the Bosnian Serbs—undermined the impartiality and negotiating potential of UNPROFOR in the field.

5. Despite the different geopolitical interests and inclinations among the leading states in the Balkans, including the United States and Russia, the management of conflict in Bosnia clearly demonstrated that Russia considers participation in international peacekeeping as an important instrument of conflict management. Russia clearly demonstrated that it shares the position of those countries, particularly the United States and United Kingdom, that intervention for humanitarian purposes could be carried out by third parties and that to this end all necessary means, including military force, can be applied. However, Russia strongly advocates that such intervention (humanitarian or peace enforcement) must be conducted only under certain conditions, to include a UN Security Council mandate and the principle that the use of force in peace operations in any case must be considered only a last resort.

## IFOR

Because the main provisions of the UN plan for peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia had not been carried out, and given the meaninglessness of a war in which there could be no winners except peace itself, a new approach to peace was needed. The European powers had already proved their inability to solve the problem unilaterally, that is, without American and Russian involvement.

Thanks to the persistent efforts of the world community and especially the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, and Germany, representatives of the three main factions in Bosnia met at the air

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69. Woodward, p. 313.

force base in Dayton, Ohio, USA, on 10 November 1995 and eventually signed the Agreement on Implementation of Provisions for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russian diplomacy played an important part in the Contact Group and in the process that led to the successful conclusion of the Dayton Agreement. On 14 December 1995, the agreement was initialed in Paris by President Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, President Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and President Tudjman of Croatia. On the next day, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1031 authorizing a new multinational peacekeeping operation.

In addition to the NATO states, Russia and some other non-bloc countries such as Austria, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Rumania, Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and the Baltic states agreed to participate. The forces totaled 60,000 soldiers who were supposed to stay 12 months.

Thus began the largest post-World War II military operation on the European continent. The military part of conflict resolution in Bosnia includes the disengagement of the hostile parties, provisions for armistice, control over arms levels, and compliance with a number of other tasks. Thus, in the course of this operation, not only are issues directly connected to conflict resolution in Bosnia being tested—elements of future European security systems are in fact being tested as well. Though the Dayton Peace Agreement was a dramatic breakthrough in the Balkan peace process, it was just the first step along the uneasy path to reconciliation among the countries in the region.

## SFOR

The mandate of the international forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina was further changed in accordance with the 20 December 1996 decision of the UN Security Council. While the tasks and goals of the forces remained the same, their fulfillment would be exercised by fewer people and resources. In the first place, the peacekeeping contingents in the former Yugoslavia were renamed. Instead of being called the Forces for Implementation of the Dayton Agreement (IFOR), they are now called Stabilization Forces (SFOR). The total

number of personnel in SFOR is about 34,000, including some 8,500 Americans. It is much smaller than IFOR, which numbered 55,000. The number of officers and soldiers in the Russian brigade was reduced from 1,600 to 1,400. The time that the Russian Federation Council had authorized for the presence of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Bosnia and Herzegovina expired on 1 July 1998, but the council extended the term to June 1999.

## **Russian participation in IFOR/SFOR**

As a result of a series of talks held between the ministers of defense of Russia and the United States, agreement was reached concerning the participation of the Russian armed forces in the operation of the multinational forces. The Russian Federation Council had given permission for Russian forces to participate in the operation.

The Russian forces consisted of a detached air-borne brigade numbering 1,600 soldiers. This brigade was organized pursuant to President Yeltsin's decree N195 and the special instruction of the defense minister of 11 November 1995. The two battalions of the brigade were armed with more than 100 mechanized infantry combat vehicles (MICVs) and armored personnel carriers (APCs), self-propelled artillery systems, air defense weapons, and small firearms, as well as support and maintenance teams. They also had about 300 transportation vehicles. Only career officers and volunteers on contract staff the brigade. Most of them have had experience in different "hot spots" in the former Soviet Union. Replacement (rotation) of brigade personnel takes place every six months. Sixteen rotations have taken place over the six years of Russia's peacekeeping presence in the former Yugoslavia.

The Russian brigade was included in the international military group "the North," most of which consists of the 1st U.S. Armored Division. It was deployed in February 1996 to the northeastern part of Bosnia (near Tuzla). This area covers 1,750 square kilometers. The disengagement line is 75 kilometers long. This area is strategically very important since it is the site of one of the sharpest confrontations of the sides. Teams of Russian peacekeeping personnel are positioned on Serbian as well as on Muslim territory. The Russian peacekeepers

also must guard the stations (posts) where meetings of Serbian and Croatian families divided by the war take place. Up to 100 people can gather at such a station simultaneously.

General command of the operation, including the Russian brigade, is exercised by the Supreme Commander of the international forces. His deputy for the Russian troops is a representative of the Russian armed forces. Orders given to the Russian brigade are signed by both of them. The headquarters of the brigade is located in the small Serbian town of Uglevik.<sup>70</sup>

Russian peacekeeping forces are financed mainly from funds collected by the Russian government during its privatization campaign. Annual expenditures for Russian participation in the operation amount to over \$20 million. Annual payments to privates and sergeants equal \$1,070 per man. The salary of the brigade's commander is \$1,430.

The participation of Russia's forces in peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia is expedient and useful for political as well as economic and purely military reasons. Politically, it means that Russia gains the support of friendly governments and regimes, and this strengthens its own national security. Participation in peacekeeping activities also provides some economic gains to Russia. As proven by the experience of some European states, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, the development and purchase of special equipment and armaments for peacekeeping brings a good sum of money to the country's military industrial complex. The moral and psychological benefits must not be underestimated either. When soldiers of peacekeeping troops provide aid to sick and hungry people and to people who have lost their homes, it helps to create a noble image of the Motherland in the eyes of the international political elite and the world community.

On the military side, Russia has been cutting down its military budget and reducing the number of its military personnel and their training facilities. The only practical alternative for building up its military

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70. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, February 24, 1998.

power, or at least maintaining military forces at a sufficient level of readiness, is through participation in peacekeeping missions, both within the CIS and far abroad, and as a part of international formations acting under the auspices of the UN, NATO, or other authoritative international organizations.

Participation in international peacekeeping also has some negative consequences. First, as we mentioned before, a chance still exists that Russia may be "accused of using peacekeeping as a means to maintain geopolitical influence and strategic positions."<sup>71</sup> The so-called "imperial" ambitions displayed by the former Soviet Union have not been totally forgotten. This could lead to the growth of suspicion and mistrust and worsen Russia's relations with both the parties participating in the conflict as well as its partners in peacekeeping operations.

It costs a good sum of money to train, equip, transport, maintain and support specially prepared officers and soldiers. Taking part in peacekeeping missions is also fraught with the risk of human losses. Russia already has lost more than 200 of its peacekeepers in different "hot spots."

However, the decisive factor for Russia's participation in international peacekeeping missions is that, if it stays away and isolates itself from peacekeeping activities, doubts could arise about its status as a great power.

## **Russian-American peacekeeping cooperation in the Balkans: experience and perspectives**

From the very beginning, the United States expressed an interest in having Russian peacekeepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But Russians were worried that the participation of Russian blue helmets there would give an otherwise exclusively NATO mission an international status that it did not deserve. As noted above, however, Russia was not the only non-NATO country contributing troops to the operation. Also, it was believed that the presence of Russians in the area

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71. *Peacekeeping and the Role of Russia in Eurasia*, p. 4.

might well somehow calm the Serbs, who believe that the Russians will defend them from any kind of an offense.

Russia's influence and Russia's positions in the Balkans historically and traditionally have been very high. From the reign of Peter the Great until the Socialist revolution in 1917, Russia, with the help of its armed forces and diplomacy, promoted the liberation of Orthodox Yugoslavs from the Turkish yoke and the establishment of their national independence. In turn, Russia relied upon and often received real support from the Yugoslavs in its numerous wars with the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, historic ties between Russians and Yugoslavs, as well as the economic, political, and military connections developed after World War II by Tito's Communist regime and the Soviet Union (though there were also periods of a harsh ideological confrontation between the two powers), had contributed to maintain a certain Russian influence in the region. Now, Russian and NATO peacekeepers have established cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This cooperation serves as a testing ground for developing the forms of the military relations.

The Russian brigade's neighbor on the left is the first brigade of the 1st U.S. Armored Division, and on the right the second brigade of the same division. The main task of the international peacekeeping forces is to preserve peace in the area, seize and control fire zones, and organize the disengagement of the sides.

The Russian brigade in Bosnia and Herzegovina has to carry out its tasks under very difficult circumstances. Time and again the Russian peacekeepers have been provoked. The most heavy and difficult mission of the "blue helmets" there is exercised at the so-called control posts, which are located directly at the former front line. Officers and soldiers live in tents and shelters. The Russian brigade's zone of responsibility in Bosnia and Herzegovina included some remote mountain areas that for almost four years previously had been the arenas of severe military clashes. There are a lot of mine fields around. Last year, Russian combat engineers found and disposed of more than 3,500 mines and shells.

The peacekeepers are also contributing to the restoration of peaceful life of civilian citizens. For example, the Americans are fulfilling humanitarian programs with broad aims: from providing schools with desks, blackboards, and textbooks, to restoring roads and constructing schools, hospitals, churches, and mosques. The Russian brigade has also accomplished some humanitarian missions, helping local people organize their civil lives. However, due to lack of funds and other resources, this assistance is carried out only through the personal initiatives of Russian officers and soldiers and is not of an official state character.

The cooperation between Russian and American peacekeepers has included some joint exercises and training courses. In July 1997, a joint training shoot was organized by American and Russian artillery units. In July 1997, a Russian paratroop company and a company of American Marines held a joint tactical exercise. In October 1997, at Tuzla airport, representatives of the Russian and American special operation forces parachuted from U.S. "Black Hawk" helicopters.

As Colonel General Anatoli Kvashnin, the head of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, said during his inspection trip to the headquarters of the Russian peacekeeping brigade in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 1997, "the successful operation of our peacekeeping brigade is the key element of the crisis solution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>72</sup>

The activities of the Russian "blue helmets" in the former Yugoslavia were held in high esteem by their American partners. For example, General Wesley Clark, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, stressed:

The multinational forces would not have been able to accomplish their peacekeeping mission in Bosnia successfully without the Russian brigade. The Russian paratroopers have done their job competently and honestly, with no partiality to any of ethnic groups living in Bosnia. They have set a standard for a new partnership of military people. Even two years ago no

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72. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, October 28, 1997.



one in the United States and in Europe could have predicted this. Today the peacekeeping cooperation among our armies is building a foundation for the future partnership for peace, and it is irreversible.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the fact that Russians and Americans began to cooperate in their peacekeeping activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the lessons they learned there have raised some questions that need to be discussed and answered. The Russian military personnel have some grievances against the Americans. They believe that the joint actions of American and Russian peacekeepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina were not accomplished on the basis of equal partnership. As General Georgi Shpak, the Russian Airborne Commander, stated:

The peacekeeping mission is supposed to be carried out equally. But Russian commanders are debarred from working out the details of the peacekeeping operation in Yugoslavia. All interactions are carried out exclusively on a tactical level. We take this as an insult. If we are the partners, we must solve all tactical and strategic problems together.<sup>74</sup>

The truth is that there cannot be "senior" and "junior" partners in an international joint mission. If there are, no success can be achieved. As for Russia, if she considers herself a great power she should seek equality with other international partners in peacekeeping operations. And if Russian soldiers are recruited for peacekeeping units simply so they can make some money, no one should expect their efficiency to be very high.

Other suspicions shared by some Russian military commanders must also be taken into account. They are afraid that, like in Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO can get a UN peacekeeping mandate and send its multinational divisions to solve a crisis that might arise inside Russia. The precedents created in the process of settling the crises in the Balkans should not apply in Russia. People in the Russian Ministry of Defense speak about the necessity of having firm guarantees against

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73. Ibid.

74. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, April 16, 1997.

this, to be established in appropriate international documents or resolutions.

Today NATO actually acts as a single coordinator of all peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia. Such a state of affairs raises a lot of objection and criticism among Russians. In our opinion, the situation can be changed for the better only if a special military structure (department or division) is set up within the framework of the United Nations. All the states that participate in peacekeeping operations must be represented in this UN structure. It must be charged with working out a peacekeeping doctrine and strategy for the members to adopt. It should study and analyze the lessons and experience of peacekeeping operations in different areas of the world, determine operational tactics, arrange training courses for multinational military units and formations, organize joint exercises, and establish a system for coordination and control over peacekeeping missions.

## **Further observations**

Not all the results of the international peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be considered negative. The conflict has been isolated due to the direct involvement of the peacekeeping forces, including the Russian battalion. The level of hostility and confrontation between Serbs and Muslims has been seriously reduced. The presence of peacekeepers in the area enabled them to carry out some humanitarian missions, including the delivery of food, medicine, and clothes to the conflict zone by different international organizations. By taking part in peacekeeping activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia directly participates in working out and implementing the overall policy for the Balkans. It is also, as was mentioned above, a practical example of Russia's cooperation with the United States and NATO.

Indeed, the Russian-NATO peacekeeping partnership was one of the main reasons the operation achieved positive results. Peace in Bosnia is maintained only because of the presence of the international peacekeeping contingent. The operation also opened new perspectives and prospects for continuing and developing cooperation in peacekeeping missions in the future and in different parts of the

world between the two great powers. The level and character of political and military-political relations between the United States and Europe, and between Russia and NATO, as well as the future of NATO, WEU, EU, and OSCE, seriously depend on whether the international community will manage to provide peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Russian peacekeepers have gained a lot of practical experience in the former Yugoslavia. The Airborne Forces Command has learned how to prepare paratrooper units to fulfill peacekeeping tasks, how to transport a large number of people and equipment, and how to deploy them expeditiously in the area of actions. It has also learned how to exercise guard duties in so-called security zones and to escort vehicles carrying humanitarian aid. Most important, Russian peacekeepers in practice have learned how to act in a complicated and difficult political and military situation, a situation that may be typical for any peacekeeping operation. The experience has proved that Russian soldiers are fit for life and service in field conditions. The Russian peacekeepers have also stood out in their high morale and discipline.

## **Kosovo: Russian and American approaches to conflict resolution**

Kosovo's potential to create a humanitarian disaster and destabilize European security had been widely understood since Yugoslavia fell apart in 1991. The interests of all the states of the southern Balkans converge on neighboring Macedonia, which has its own large Albanian minority and is the focus of territorial and national claims by all of its neighbors. Thus war in Kosovo risks directly involving a half-dozen states in the region, including NATO members Greece and Turkey.<sup>75</sup> One of the distinguishing features of the Kosovo problem was clearly stated by Lord David Owen: "The situation can suddenly be inflamed without any conscious decision by Belgrade. There is so much dry tinder lying around to fuel secessionist temperament."<sup>76</sup>

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75. Tihomir Loza, "Kosovo Albans: Closing the Ranks," *Transition*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 1998), p. 17.

As to Russia's approach to the Kosovo conflict, there are different views inside the country on the mechanisms and ways to resolve it. The main differences concern the question, Who will bring peace to this area and how?

Before considering the specifics of Russia's views on the Kosovo problem, first of all it should be underlined that there is a common understanding among political and academic communities that Kosovo today is one of the most dangerous "hot spots" in Europe. It draws Moscow's deep concern and attention. Moreover, there is a common understanding in Russia, as well as in the United States and Europe, that the present status quo in Kosovo cannot be left alone because it will lead to new escalations of tension and will facilitate the deterioration of the wider political and economic situation in the Balkans—that is, in Kosovo itself, in Serbia, and in the whole southeastern region of Europe.

The distinguishing feature of Russia's position toward Kosovo is that it believes that Serbia and Yugoslavia should give more autonomy to Kosovo, to arrange a political dialogue there, and to achieve peaceful settlement of internal contradictions at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield.

Aiming to decrease tensions around Kosovo, Russia tried to persuade Yugoslavia's President Milosevic to take the first steps toward a peaceful solution. These steps would include withdrawing Serbian armed forces, making a commitment not to use military force against civilians, allowing international organizations to monitor the development of the situation, and allowing humanitarian organizations access to Kosovo for relief purposes. Russia also urged Milosevic to start political negotiations with the ethnic Albanians, who number about two million, or 90 percent of the population.

Another feature of Russia's approach to Kosovo is that Russia not only declares the necessity of resolving the conflict in Kosovo, but also actively participates in the overall attempts of the world community

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76. "Interview with David Owen on the Balkans," *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1993), p. 5.

to find appropriate ways and solutions to the problem. In this regard, it's worth noting that Russia has supported all the crucial UN resolutions on the Kosovo case, despite the fact that its positions have been criticized by Serbia. In particular, Russia voted in favor of the UN Resolution on 31 March 1998 that condemned the use of excessive force by the Serbian police against civilians and peaceful demonstrations in Kosovo as well as all acts of terrorism by the Kosovo Liberation Army and all external support for terrorist activity in Kosovo, including finance, arms, and training.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, Russia supported the adoption of Resolution 1160 under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (that is, as peace enforcement, rather than just peacekeeping). Chapter VII allows the use of force without the consent of the parties in conflict. The resolution also introduced an arms embargo to prevent the sale or supply of arms to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including to ethnic Albanian groups in Kosovo.

The active participation of Russia in the Contact Group work and in other formats, as well as its votes during crucial decisions in the UN Security Council clearly indicates that Russia, understanding the complexity of the problems in Kosovo, actually gave a "green light" to peacekeeping and peacemaking activities in this region if the situation required them.

There are still some differences in principle between Russia and the United States in their approaches to conflict resolution in Kosovo. While the Americans and some other active NATO member-states may claim that there is no other way to intervene except with military forces in this internal conflict, Russia's position has in fact been more cautious.

- First, Russia did not consider that all means had been used to achieve a peaceful solution before the forces resorted to military power.
- Second, Russia wanted the United States to ensure that Albanians should also take a step forward and start negotiating with Serbian authorities under UN or American auspices.

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77. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, June 11, 1998.

- Third, Russia insists that any NATO out-of-area enforcement operation must be authorized by the UN Security Council. Evgeny Primakov, Russia's new Prime Minister, repeatedly underlined in his statements that Russia is against any NATO military actions in Kosovo, or any form of the use of force, as well as any deployment of NATO troops on the territory of Albania and Macedonia, if such actions have not been approved by the Security Council. Primakov has stressed that Russia is extremely cautious on this issue and does not want to create a precedent that could be repeated in the future.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, the crucial issue today for the United States and NATO is the issue of the legitimacy of NATO's unilateral intervention into internal affairs of any state through military force without a mandate from the UN Security Council. According to international law and practice, only the UN Security Council is empowered to authorize any type of enforcement actions against any sovereign state. How far are NATO countries ready to go? Do they really intend to destroy the fundamental principles of international relations that have helped to avoid many conflicts for the last 50 years?

There are clear attempts among some NATO countries and in the United States to initiate the revision of some basic principles of international relations for the new geopolitical environment. For instance, William Cohen, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, restated the American view in September 1998 that NATO needed no UN mandate to use force in out-of-area operations, including Kosovo. He claimed that NATO could intervene by force in the Kosovo conflict under the pretext that the situation there is "a threat to collective security."<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Germany's then-Defense Minister Ruhe claimed that NATO's post-Cold War relationship with Moscow is based on the notion that Russia has no veto whenever NATO needs to act.<sup>80</sup>

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78. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 30, 1998.

79. *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, June 16, 1998.

80. *The Moscow Times*, September 25, 1998.

Along with strong verbal messages to Milosevic in September 1998, NATO took some unilateral steps that caused great concern not only in Moscow, but also in some other countries. Despite the fact that UN Resolution 1160 on Kosovo does not explicitly authorize UN member states to intervene there, the USA and NATO issued an "activation warning" to Serbia for "limited" and "phased" strikes—that is, NATO's military had begun to lay out detailed plans for airstrikes and cruise missile attacks in Yugoslavia.<sup>81</sup>

As a result of the strong and persistent American position on Kosovo, including a clear threat to intervene with NATO air strikes, as well as diplomatic pressure on Serbia by Russia and other international organizations, some positive results were achieved. After the meeting between Milosevic and President Yeltsin in Moscow, the world community managed to conclude some sort of mini-Dayton agreement with Serbia. The deployment of an international monitoring mission organized by the OSCE began in November 1998. OSCE military observers are deployed in all crucial places in the territory of Kosovo. This mission must carry out a full monitoring of how all the parties in the conflict comply with the agreement. It's worth noting that both American and Russian military officers have been assigned to the OSCE mission.

It is difficult today, at the beginning of 1999, to predict the development of the political-military situation in and around Kosovo and the outcomes of the deployment of the OSCE military mission in Kosovo. It's clear only that a new phase in Kosovo's history has been started. The international community has become directly involved on the ground in the settlement of the deep historic and complex contradictions in this part of the Balkans.

There are no doubts that some difficult and crucial decisions are to be made both by the opposing parties and by the international community. Russia believes that combat activities must be halted and a cease-fire regime introduced. It particularly believes that effective controls over the Kosovo Liberation Army must be established since the KLA is actively conducting terrorist acts against local police and

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81. *The Moscow Times*, September 25, 1998.

civilian Serbs residing in Kosovo. The KLA's activities undermine the negotiating process and endanger the lives of local Serb minorities in Kosovo.<sup>82</sup>

In sum, the deployment of OSCE observers in Kosovo marked the beginning of a new phase of international involvement in the resolution of the Kosovo conflict. Keeping in mind the deep historical contradictions in Kosovo between Serbians and Albanians, one can predict that the world community, including the United States and Russia, will inevitably have to return repeatedly to the crucial lessons learned earlier from the management of the Bosnian conflict in 1992–98. The key issue is how these lessons are to be applied in Kosovo.

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82. Ed. comment: Others are concerned as well with the force and terror used by Serbian police against the local Albanian majorities in Kosovo.



## Concluding remarks

The situation in the Balkans today may determine how the important issues of the distribution of political power in Europe and in the whole world in the next millennium are resolved.

When several countries participate in an operation such as the peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, each of them pursues its own national interests. Russia, as noted, also has national interests in the Balkans. These interests have deep historical roots and are based on the necessity of preserving cultural, economic, and military cooperation between Russia and the Balkan nations. This means that Russian policy in the Balkans must be an active one. If Russia doesn't want the United States to take upon itself the role of a single coordinator of all the peacekeeping missions in the region, then it should certainly continue to take part in international peacekeeping activities there. If Russia doesn't participate in international peacekeeping operations, its absence will have negative consequences for its influence on the world scene.

Russia should certainly avoid confrontation with any country and military or political alliance, but at the same time it should conduct an active policy in all directions, including participation in international activities in preventing and resolving conflicts.

The experience and lessons of the participation of Russian paratroopers in international peacekeeping operations in the Balkans have provided two significant answers:

- First, Russia can and must contribute to efforts to support global and regional peace and stability.
- Second, Russia can and must develop cooperation with the United States and NATO on a number of global and regional issues.

IFOR and SFOR can be considered models for future peacekeeping operations only on the condition that they are set up and operate under international law and in accordance with UN decisions or those of some other authoritative international organization.

The development of international relations in the post-Cold War period raises new demands for peacekeeping operations. These demands extend outside the traditional frameworks of peacekeeping operations. That is, they are likely to involve some elements of peace enforcement. Peace enforcement may be carried out with an acceptable level of risk and efficiency if:

- The conflict presents a real danger to global, regional, or sub-regional security.
- The conflict involves massive violations of human rights.
- One or several parties participating in the conflict refuse to follow the decisions of the United Nations or another authoritative international organization.
- The UN decides to introduce sanctions with the aim of keeping the sides in confrontation from further military escalation.
- All the parties participating in the conflict accept the presence of peacekeeping forces in the zone of conflict, whatever their state and national affiliation.
- A deadlock in the development of the conflict and emergence of "military tiredness" of the confronting sides becomes obvious, such that the opponents are impelled to search for peaceful solutions.

If this set of conditions were fulfilled, the necessity of an urgent use of force for the purpose of a quick and successful solution of the conflict would be easily predetermined.

The experience in the Balkans should be studied thoroughly by experts, politicians, and military commanders. They must study such issues as the nature of peacekeeping operations, the means and forms of conducting them by joint military formations, their management and control, and the provision of all types of maintenance and logis-

tics. The Russian government needs to conduct such practical evaluations while working out its peacekeeping policy. There are still disconnects in the approaches of different state and public bodies to peacekeeping, even in the Russian Defense Ministry. These differences seriously restrain Russia's peacekeeping activities and undermine the international prestige of the Russian Federation.

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